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OR

A VERMONTER'S ADVENTURES IN MEXICO.

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William Brewster's Ward



OR

A VERMONTER'S ADVENTURES IN MEXICO.

Ed. Rumilly

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PUTNAM POMFRET'S WARD;

OR,

A VERMONTER'S ADVENTURES IN MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

THE GAMING-HOUSE.

WHAT were the thoughts of the somber-looking man, who, muffled in a dark cloak, which shaded his bronzed face, was leaning against a tree in the street Alameda of Mexico, watching the curtained windows of a large mansion, might not be revealed through his compressed lip and lowering eye. That his meditations were not of a quiet cast was evident from a start which at times pervaded his frame, but whether such movement resulted from anger, fear, or impatience, it was difficult to surmise.

Many persons passed the solitary gazer, some leaving or entering the house; and, as often as the great entrance-door fell back upon its hinges, the muffled watcher bent his glance upon the opening, as if to discover some object of search. Numbers on whom his regards fell seemed to be familiars, and returned his look with a glance of recognition, but none stayed to greet him further, either repelled by his gloomy deportment, or undesirous of colloquy.

Thus an hour or more passed on, and the street began to grow lonely, and echoed only fitfully to the quick tread of belated pedestrians, hurrying homeward. The watcher, it was manifest, began to grow restless, and twice or thrice left his position at the tree, to pass and repass the gaming-house, muttering as he did so an expression of impatience. At last, however, while his gaze rested upon the door, as if he were half in doubt whether it would not be better at once to enter the

mansion, a sudden stream of light flashed upon the walk, and the figure of a man descended the heavy stone steps which led to the pavement.

"It is he—it is Falcone!" muttered the muffled observer and he at once crossed the street.

Apparently, however, he had not calculated on the reception which he was to meet from the other, for his form was yet wrapped closely with his mantle, when the new-comer suddenly threw himself roughly forward, and before a movement could be made by the individual assailed, grasped him savagely by the throat, bearing him to the ground.

The muffled man was one not easily thrown off his guard—nevertheless, the present attack was so unexpected, that for a moment he felt himself powerless, while the cold muzzle of a pistol was pressed against his forehead, and an agitated voice muttered hoarsely in his ear:

"Your purse, Señor!"

"Take your hand from my throat and your pistol from my head, and we will consider," was the quiet reply.

"Quick—your purse or you die! I am a desperate man!"

"A ruined gamester—ha, Señor!" cried the assailed. "Come, come, I am your friend, and my purse is yours, Señor Falcone!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the foot-pad, starting and removing his hold, while the other rose to his feet, "you know me?" Then endeavoring to regain the advantage he had resigned, he continued quickly, "but you shall die."

"Not so fast, my very good friend. I know you for a brave man, a reckless gamester, and this time for a gentleman of my own cloth, with whom I shall be pleased to drink a glass of wine to our better acquaintance, Señor Falcone."

"And who, in the fiend's name—"

"At your service, Señor. And now," said the stranger, adjusting his collar with a movement at once self-possessed and graceful, "as you have not blown my brains out so suddenly as appeared to be your design a moment since, allow me to be your banker."

Saying this, he drew a heavy purse from his breast-pocket and tendered it to his late assailant.

"I ask pardon! Many thanks!" returned the latter. "I remain your debtor very gratefully, only asking that I may know to whom I am indebted."

"All in good time. For the present be content, Señor Falcone, not to look a gift-horse in the mouth, as we say in Spain."

"Oho! you are then no Mexican?"

"You are very quick at conclusions, Señor. Well, let us part, for I perceive that you have a mind to empty your purse once more at *monté* and I have other business on hand. But you will meet me again, Señor?"

"Gladly, if you but say when and where."

"To-morrow, at sunset, in the botanic garden. Be there, and we may become better acquainted."

"I shall not fail," answered the gambler, warmly grasping the hand which was extended to him, and then turning toward the threshold of the gaming-house, from which he had so recently rushed forth, a despairing bankrupt.

But at this moment, the jalousied door of the mansion was dashed violently open, and a young man, whose countenance appeared ghastly pale, staggered down the steps.

"Another victim!" cried the stranger with a laugh. "But luckily I have not another purse."

Falcone uttered a cry, as his eyes fell upon the new-comer. He darted quickly forward, and had half ascended the wide stone steps, when a sharp, ringing report broke the night's stillness, a bright flash illumined for a moment the street, and a dull sound echoed upon the pavement. The body of a dead man rolled down the steps.

"Shot himself!" cried Falcone, with an oath.

"Another victim to *monté*!" muttered the other personage; and then, as the noise of hurrying feet approached, he seized the arm of his new acquaintance, and hurried him from the spot.

"Come with me—*monté* is ended for the night."

Why should it not be? It had made a robber and a suicide in the short space of ten minutes.

CHAPTER II

THE SUICIDE'S HOME.

AMONG the variously attired and odd-looking persons attracted toward the gaming-house in the street Alameda, by the sudden report of a pistol-shot, one might have been noticed whose exterior presented certainly as strange an appearance as did that of any.

This individual was appareled in garments which seemed to have derived their origin in divers parts of creation, albeit noticeable neither for elegance nor costliness. A broad-brimmed palm-leaf hat slouched over his countenance, with a swaggering sort of air, and a brownish-white linen coat, lamentably tattered, draggled from his shoulders. Tight-fitting breeches of yellow nankeen cotton, with parti-colored woolen stockings of Mexican amplitude drawn over them, completed his singular attire, and he marched with as careless a step as if he trod on land that had belonged to his ancestors, since the days of the Conquistator.

But no one who glanced twice at this person (and there were many who did so,) could have been so far deceived as to fancy him a Mexican; for there was an expression about his actions and manner that stamped him unmistakably as a native of that region whose ambitious representatives are found wherever wind blows or light penetrates, but whose actual localities are embraced in a radius of five hundred miles around Bunker Hill monument.

It was our old friend and adventurer Putnam Pomfret, the "Knight-Errant" portion of whose history we have narrated in connection with the story of the Peon Prince.

Borne along in the crowd that pressed forward to the spot where, rigid in the embrace of death, the poor suicide lay in a pool of his own blood, Pomfret reached the gaming-house. The confused noise of exclamations and hurrying feet, lights flashing over many-colored garments, presented a scene both novel and striking to the stranger, and, pushing lustily forward to gain a position from which he could behold the cause of

excitement, he soon found himself close to the balustraded steps, and directly opposite the body of *monte's* victim.

The dead gambler lay upon his face, his garments saturated with the crimson flood that dyed the pavement, streaming from his shattered forehead ; and as one of the crowd stooped and raised his inanimate form, the light of a torch flashed upon his face. Putnam Pomfret bent forward, and saw that it was no Mexican countenance.

Blue eyes, clouded with the film of death, and a fair complexion, slightly shaded by deep masses of flaxen hair, proclaimed at once that the suicide was of Saxon origin. One hand still clutched the instrument of self-murder, and the other was pressed tightly to the cold bosom. Pomfret advanced, and stooping beside the body, loosened the rigid gripe of the closed fingers.

A locket of gold was held firmly between those fingers, as if clasped in the last spasm. The hand, as the Yankee lifted it, seemed to cling tenaciously to the treasured token—a miniature, upon the golden back of which, by the light of a torch, Pomfret beheld inscribed a single line, and that revealed a history :

"To my brother. New Orleans, July 1, 1845."

"He is my countryman!" cried the Yankee, raising the mangled head of the suicide from the pavement, and looking round upon the group of dark-eyed Mexicans, who at once comprehended the feeling which led to the action. Three or four of them immediately stooped beside the body, and raising it gently in their arms, prepared to assist in bearing it to the dead-house.

In Mexico the occurrence of a suicide or assassination is not so rare an event as to create much consternation or wonder. Indeed, save in peculiar instances, a catastrophe like this may take place without seriously breaking in upon the usual routine of business or amusement. Consequently, though the suddenness of the young man's death, and the obviousness of ill-luck at play being its occasion, afforded some food for speculation and discussion among the lookers-on, there is little doubt that Putnam Pomfret was the only breast that throbbed with sincere regret. Only the humble Yankee felt that in the cold weight he was aiding to sustain,

was once enshrined a living and immortal spirit. Only he really sorrowed, for he reflected that the dead man was his countryman, and, like himself, a stranger in a strange land.

The somber procession hurried to the nearest guard-house, there to make the deposition in reference to the finding of the body—for which purpose the inmates of the gambling-house were also summoned. A short examination elicited the brief story of the lost one. He was known to be a young American—a stranger, for some time resident in the capital. What was his name, or what his vocation, could not be so easily learned; but his residence was ascertained from an entry on his tablets, and thither, with Pomfret as its only mourner, the body of the suicide was ordered to be conveyed.

And thus, while the night wore on, and the streets grew silent and deserted, the victim of *monté* was borne to his home—or the house which had been designated as the late residence of the unhappy young man. It was in a retired quarter of the city, and was a dwelling of modest exterior, standing apart from others in the street. Pomfret knocked at the narrow door, which, after a while, was opened by an old negro, who, beholding a group of men disclosed in the dim light, uttered a hasty exclamation in a language recognized at once by the Yankee as his own.

"Come down here," said Pomfret, beckoning to the black, who evidently hesitated before descending the few stone steps.

But at this moment, the clouds which, during the evening, had overspread the sky, were parted by the full moon, and a stream of light suddenly fell upon the face and figure of the corpse. The negro saw it, and uttering a shrill cry of terror, rushed down from the threshold. He paused a moment with a stupefied air, gazing upon the blood-stained burden which had been deposited by its rude bearers upon the flagging, and then, with a long wail, threw himself upon his knees beside it.

"Oh, massa! massa Charley! Oh Lord! Massa is dead—dead!" cried the black, clasping his arms around the body, and rocking his own frame to and fro. "Oh, my dear massa Charley is murdered!"

"Who was your master?" asked Poinfret, in a low voice.

But the negro seemed to have no thought of aught save the fearful spectacle before him. He moaned and essayed to lift the body in his arms, crying, in agonizing tones:

"Murdered—Massa Charley murdered! Oh, what shall I do? Massa's done gone!"

At length Poinfret succeeded in arresting his attention, and sought a reply to his question, which the negro endeavored to afford, though his words were so broken by sobs as to be scarcely intelligible. And before, indeed, any definite information could be elicited from the agitated slave, for such he apparently was, a new incident added interest to the scene.

The door of the house had been left open by the black, in his hurried movement on recognizing the body of his master; and now, as the old servant renewed his lamentations, a rush was heard through the interior of the hall, and a large dog of the Newfoundland breed bounded over the threshold, down the steps, and with a loud bark, leaped upon the breast of the master. The Mexican, standing near shrank and fled away, endowing, in their superstitious fear, that it was no mortal thing they beheld; and the animal, placing his fore paws upon the bosom of the corpse, raised his head, and gave utterance to a prolonged and dismal howl.

It was a fearful sight. Stretched upon the pavement lay the unfortunate suicide, his garments saturated with blood, his features ghastly and rigid, upturned in the moonlight. Kneeling beside, wildly tearing his grizzled locks in the vehemence of his sorrow, was the old negro, sounding his monotonous, wailing cry. And, erect upon the corpse, his head thrown back, and the frightened howl proceeding incessantly from his mossy throat, appeared the dog that had recognized the presence of death. Poinfret, though stout-hearted, could not look unmoved on such a scene. He dashed his hand across his eyes, and turned toward the door, but started suddenly at the presence he beheld.

A maid in standing in the threshold. Clad in a white robe, with one small hand pressed upon her bosom, and the other holding a taper which cast its trembling rays upon the group below, she stood as if paralyzed—her gaze centered upon the master's form. It was apparent that she could not at once

realize the entire horror of the spectacle, for her heart seemed scarcely to pulsate, her eyes were meaningless. But, presently, as if forced from her by an inward spur, her voice broke upon the night-air in a cry so agonizing that it was like a dagger-stroke upon the bosom of those who heard it. Then, with a bound, the maiden reached the couch, and sank insensible beside it, her pallid cheek resting upon the cold brow of the dead.

And there they lay together—brother and sister; a sight that might touch the heart of savages, while the heart of savages swayed back and forth above them, with clasped hands, muttering his broken exclamations, and the dog howled in unison the requiem of his slain master.

When Falcone, the gambler, was hurried away by the now-former and now-striken acquaintance whom he had attempted to rob, the young man presented, under the dim moonlight that strayed through masses of gray clouds, an appearance denoting great internal emotion. His face was ashy white, and his limbs trembled as they clung to the hand which hurried him along.

"What, comadé, you do not fight well, truly, that your hands are so loose?" said the stranger. "Thank your good stars, Señor, that 'tis not your own body, instead of another man's, that is now lying stark before you gamblers!"

"Dead!—dead!—O, horrible! I look back for a moment!" murmured Falcone, lifting his hands to his eyes, as if to shut out the memory of the scene he had left.

"What troubles you, Señor Falcone?" demanded his companion, endeavoring to steady the gambler, who was swaying to and fro, as he walked.

"I swear by all the saints it was not my will to kill him, the other, willy—" 'twas his own act! I know it, I know it!"

The night had been one of ill-omen to the gambler. At the gaming-table, where he had staved and lost his last dollar, he had also drunk deeply, and taken opium to drown the frenzy of play, and the self-reproach which he had undergone. Now opiate and alcohol had combined to render him torpid, and prone only to wicked thoughts and fiends. Meantime, the stranger, who appeared destined to conduct him for some ulterior purpose, walked the streets of Boston

reason and madness, until the gambler became nearly imbecile, and then, clasping his arm, whispered:

"My friend, the street is not our best bedchamber. Come with me, Gabriel Falcone!"

The younger man's eyelids quivered, and he tried to speak, but the effort only shapèd some incoherent words. Then his companion bent down, and, embracing him with a vigorous arm, half drew and half led him rapidly through the now silent and deserted streets.

After traversing several squares, this singular guide passed before an unfigured, substantial house, standing back from the walk, and almost hidden by large trees. The doorway of this mansion was open, and a shaded lamp burned in a recess of its hall, where, likewise, was an oaken stand, with a small bell upon it, which Falcone's conductor rung briskly, summoning therewith a bronze-faced servant from a couch near by.

"Did not I have a bell made ready for this gentleman?" was the abrupt command of the new-comer, who was evidently the master of the ancient house.

The servant did appear without speaking, while his master placed Falcone on the couch, and seated himself beside him. The gambler had sunk into a drunken stupor, and his new companion perused his face intently by the light of the solitary lamp in the hall. That face was no longer distorted as when under the influence of his pugnacity in the street. Only a still blankness was now apparent, indicating the degradation of sensibility by intoxication. The head drooped on the shoulder, the eyes were closed, and a relaxation of every limb showed an utter prostration of energy. In a few moments the servant returned, and, with his master's assistance, conveyed Falcone to an inner apartment, where he was laid on a comfortable bed. Then, as the lackey retired, and the gambler's stuporous breathing gave a assurance that he was merged in dull slumber, the steward, master of the house, laid his arms across his breast, and bade him sleep in his quiet room, with a smile of kindly satisfaction.

"Good Falcone! The master had a dander, and a dither, and a fit of passion, and the Captain of the watch, and the constable, and the Guard, and the Stable-boys, and the

you! Your mother, Gabriel, incurred a debt to me, and I forget not—neither forgive. Therefore, Gabriel Falzone, I shall claim full quittance from you, before we part!"

Thus the man muttered, an evil smile on his lip; and then, with another look at the gambler's apathetic face, he left him to his slumbers.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOOD MAN'S CLOSING SCENE.

DURING the same hours of night in which were transpiring the scenes already known to our readers, the common tragedy of death was transpiring in many streets of Mexico. In fact, what day or night, what hour or minute, is free from visitation of that dread guest whom all must some time entertain? Whether he come robed in crimson garments of war, or yellow drapery of pestilence—whether he breathe life up in Beauty's cheek, or stile Age with his nightmare embrace, still, death is omnipresent. He enters and departs as he lists, and no man knows when he shall knock at the door of his heart.

But in the passage of a good spirit from earthly habitation, there is no reality of gloom. The weakling, sumptuous upon earth, whose life has reached its natural term, feels not, if fit to die, a bitterness in the cup he must drink. The invalid child of sorrow can not help but weep over the tokens which are to sustain him in all future journeys.

So, then, there was no anguish in the passing of a good man, Don Tadeo, who lay trembling on the threshold of his small room at the hour of midnight—an aged man, with broad and scarcely-wrinkled brow, over which could a few lines of silvery hair—an old man, with bright and quiet eyes, which shone the assurance of blessed immortality. One of his thin hands clasped that sacred volume which is the rock of a Christian's faith—the other rested on the breast of a youth who knelt beside the bed with weeping eyes and parted lips.

"Weep not, Alonso!" murmured the dying man. "You

have life before you, and I only depart into another life. Calmly do I go, for I know that goodness remains in the heart of him whom I have cherished as the child of my age. Perhaps, my son, as we have sometimes conjectured, the spirits of the departed are permitted to watch over the friends of their earthly love. Surely, if that be so, my joy must be enhanced in contemplating my Alonzo's virtue and happiness."

"Oh! my uncle! my benefactor! my more than father. My God, grant me strength in this hour of trial!"

"Be assured that he will, Alonzo. Our parting is only for a season, dear son," said the old man. "Have we not read together," he continued, reverently lifting the Bible to his lips, "not alone the sublime truths of this sacred volume, but the magnificent testimony of that other great book which is unrolled to reason's eye in all the universe of matter? Have we not explored the mysteries of celestial creation and looked upon nature in her manifold moods? And shall we have walked together in the holy pathways of probation, only to be parted now, with no hope of eternal reunion? No, Alonzo, we shall go on in company the light of superior knowledge and virtue and worshiping at still purer shrine, and receiving into our折衷 the light of wisdom from its fountain-head?"

The aged man's eyes beamed with beatific and serene. A smile suffused them, adding tenderness to their expression. His pale cheeks flushed with holy ardor, and pressing the book of God to his heart, he smiled with serene joy.

It is well known, the terrible lack of religion and philosophy to enable the poor man to meet with resolution the hour of parting from his son, or to him as this old man. And Captain in his day, the child had found a father, the youth a master and a friend, in the only brother of his master. Don Tadeo, though but recently bereaved by the death of one whom he had loved with a motherly love, had not lost that maternal sympathy with his household. He had the mind of the man, and the heart of the child, in his life; his day, to teach object, the practice of activity, the love of man, and the pursuit of knowledge in all her manifold paths. Not needly, Don Tadeo perforce taught his

own wants and sufficient to share largely with the nearly around him. His years, from the age of thirty, had been spent amid the wild scenery of Upper Mexico—among snow-capped hills, and ample forests, where he had felt the untroubled breeze of *la tierra fría*. He lived almost a hermit's life until the death of his sister left the child Alonzo to his care. The orphan gained a kind protector and a happy home, and the bachelor guardian henceforth found an object for his affection, and a docile pupil on whom to lavish all the stores of his varied learning. The orphan's childhood only had passed like a pleasant romance in the retreat of his master's dwelling-place, and it was only during the last year of his uncle's life that he had been a resident of the capital. Up to this period he had dwelt amid nature's beauties, like a child, yet imbued with all the mystery lore of old romance. Walking during summer solstice woods, under leafy still groves, or climbing rocky highlands, with bough bent to the touch in certain breeze, he had drunk deep draughts of romance, and mingled the past with the present. His world existed in quiet, unbroken by the world's tumult—a solitude, veiled by clouds.

But of late years, the youth's heart had the world with infinite longings for something yet unknown. The thrill of memory of his studies, his walks and reveries, grew like a fire and unceasing. He felt within him the strong hand of an unknown power, ever and anon unfolding a corner of the curtain which enveloped his dreamlike soul, and revealing the glimmerings of a future yet unborn.

And for such an idealistic being did they now drag the chains of reality. The hours were slowly passing to the youth's conception a new thought—a new aspiration. That awful idea which was first revealed to mortal's spirit by the genitors, the full extent of the Eternal's judgment upon their disobedience—that immeasurably awful idea which for hours the curse of death—was now about to stir the tranquil waters of Alonzo's enthusiast soul.

The solemn moment was lingered, yet it could hardly be for they knew not what and in what the secret lay. Dr. T. C. Alonzo, a physician of the city, and a man of his good, and how good, was the man.

• sprung from the deep and abiding affection which he entertained toward his noble uncle.

Don Tadeo had remained silent for some moments, his lips moving in quiet prayer, and his eyes glowing with sublime confidence in the mercy of that Being in whose presence he was soon to enter. At length, however, the uncle spoke in a low voice.

"Dear Alvaro, before I depart, I have a brief history to relate, which has ever till now been locked within my own bosom. The tomb doth all earthly memories, and I sought to have borne to my grave the reminiscences of sorrow and disappointment which made my youth a desert till Heceta unchained a book and blessing in giving to me my Alvaro. But now I feel a desire in my heart, urging me to recall the story of my youth, and perhaps, in its recital, you, my boy, may at once learn all that your uncle has ever concealed from you, and gather from the story some knowledge of the strange work on which you are about to enter. Listen!—but first, dear Alvaro, reach to me your hand, as I do."

The young man rose from his kneeling posture, and proceeded to a bookcase, brought from one of its shelves a small box, of curiously carved ebony, which he knew to be much-prized by his uncle. Don Tadeo unlocked this casket, and covering his face still for a few moments, he remained in the quiet, as if reviving past impressions. Then he took the young man's hand, and began his narration:

"My Alvaro—you behold tears in these aged eyes; yet still my heart beat wildly, even with failing pulse! Jaque, then, Alvaro, what must have been the strength of that passion which, through all the hope of years, has yet clung to this frail heart! Jaque! how I loved, who, never possessing, have always adored the object of my boyish first affection. She was another, and I learned that she was unhappy—that she was that too common sacrifice to pride and haughty temper, and filled with the throned malice by parents and brother, own creation. Her husband, older than herself by many years, was not a man to win or keep the love of such a woman. Poor! erring, wretched, he had passed his youth in dissipation, holding every passion to its utmost limit; and even after his nuptials with the beautiful

being he had literally bought (for his wealth was enormous) he neither refrained from nor concealed the excesses to which he had become habituated.

"I learned the history of his bad and wicked ways, and at intervals, by degrees, not from Dona Matilde's lips, though afterward her heart was opened to me like a sister's; but by observation and the remarks of others, who still live, and by my own abiding interest. At my first interview with the lovely but unhappy lady, she had been married only a year, and an infant reposed in her tender bosom. How I tried to subdue control the passion which immediately took possession of me; how I afterward refrained from disclosing it to Maria when I soon after became a constant visitor at her husband's house, and was thrown daily in her company; how I could, like as a miser does his gold, all manifestation of the fire which was consuming my very existence. He alone knew me, who overruled all my ways, and who in mercy did me well to cause to subdue mine.

"But such a man could not long be left alone. In the month of April in the spring of my I had written to my beloved wife, when, at length, a round body flame-like, I saw in the sky, which had preceded it, and I awoke in time to see it. With hope of life, my first collected thoughts turned me to the memory of her who was not an hour removed. Her name was the first word that tripped from my lips, and then I learned the day of my life—*to live in the world*."

Don Tadeo penit in his pocket, and took his hat in his right hand, as he went on, looking about him. "Maria was to me and to her husband the world. During those few months when I lay ill, I lived in pain and anguish, a continual drama of life and death—sick unto death, too sick to entertain and talk with any one. My all, my Maria, I desired her to be with me, and I implored, with one of his keenest expressions of pain, that she and child to come to life again in the world, and that which she, poor child, had lost, could be restored. The

"Maria," returned the old man, looking at his hands, though his voice, as he went on, became more and more feeble—"Maria was to me and to her husband the world. During those few months when I lay ill, I lived in pain and anguish, a continual drama of life and death—sick unto death, too sick to entertain and talk with any one. My all, my Maria, I desired her to be with me, and I implored, with one of his keenest expressions of pain, that she and child to come to life again in the world, and that which she, poor child, had lost, could be restored. The

villain suspected to have enticed her, was a young libertine, of fortune equal to that of her husband, and of a character much like his. But this man, soon after the disappearance of my beloved, had returned to his old haunts, and, when called to account by Maria's husband, denied all knowledge of the woman, and swore that he was not responsible for her absence. His statement, however, was generally disbelieved, because as circumstances conspired to fix complicity on him; and so bad was his reputation that many scrupled not to suspect him of having added a darker crime to that of abduction. Maria's husband, indifferent as he was, roued him still at this point, fought with his false friend and dangerously wounded him. The authorities took up the matter, but after close examination, no positive evidence was elicited in support of the popular sentiment, and the libertine, recovering from his almost fatal wound, soon after left Mexico for foreign parts."

Alain Don Talbot laid his face with his transparent fingers; and Alonzo, though deeply interested, implored his uncle to refrain from recalling to memory events so harrowing to his soul. But Don Talbot shook his head, and proceeded with his story:

"When I recovered so far as to be able to speak, I banished all the rest in the wretched tragedy. Maria's husband, tormented with chagrin at the flight of his wife, and perhaps conscious that his own worthless character had been the occasion of it, gave himself up from the time of his duel to a course of reckless debauch which speedily brought him to the gates of death. At the period when these details were communicated to me, the miserable man was raving, under the influence of opium, from which maledict he never recovered."

Don Talbot ended his narrative, and, taking the lid of the little casket that had remained on the bureau beside him, he took from it a gold locket, the spring of which he pressed, and disclosed the miniature likeness of a bejeweled woman.

"This was the shadow of my Maria," murmured Don Talbot, "and I give it into your keeping as the most sacred memento of your poor uncle, who, having the dear old soul, and quiet body now, long withdraws the approach of death."

in the sweet hope of reunion with her angelic spirit in that land where we 'shall see no longer through a glass, darkly, but face to face?"

With these words Don Tadeo pressed the portrait to his lips, kissing it softly, while bright tears rolled slowly down his aged cheeks. Replacing the locket in its case with his own trembling hand, he fell gently back on the pillow, his head with a sigh so low that it seemed but a natural rustle of the good man's spirit passed to another home—to calm and quiet was the transition; and perhaps Don Tadeo did not clasp the hand of his immortal beloved, awaking him without, ere yet his mortal friend had ceased to live, in his dying words, so full of tenderest hope.

CHAPTER IV

THE YANKEE.

PUTNAM Pomfret, as he sat by an open window, looking forth into the gray dawning of a Mexican day, exhibited very little of that self-assured and reckless expression which is supposed to characterize the North American Slave in foreign lands. In truth, he had passed a night of anxiety and unrest, for it had been his sorrowful task to witness the death-corpse of that unfortunate countryman, whom he had so dared to break the temple of his own despising soul and hurl the naked and shivering spirit into the dreary depths of an Almighty Judge.

Through the still hours of night, when the city of Chihuahua, with the other Mexican towns who are now all clustered close to their various homes, Pomfret remained in the dark, death-like impress of the duty required of him, his hands by the sides with the iron-clad determination of the things—the kindred of country remained in a state of suspense. Happily, however, he was spared the witness of the scene of sorrow—a sorrow that brooked no sympathy, a kind of cold voice—the sorrow of that young and lovely being, the dead

of the last young man. In that dreadful instant, when, at the sight of her brother's mangled form, the reason of the man lay still to the blow, and with a frantic cry, she sank beside the table that moment a deep insensibility overwhelmed her, and she fell into a stupor that happily continued for the night. The old negro, assisted by a female servant, conveyed his unconscious mistress to her chamber, and then returned to all in the disposition of his master's remains. And when the body, rolled from the pavement into an apartment of the house, was laid upon the earth which had been the ground of his bed when living, the faithful black remained in the following posture beside it, and shared with the mourning dog the watchful vigils of the night. Pondering, after giving his name and residence to an official, in order that he might be called upon to undergo any further examination concerning the scuffle, was allowed to remain in the house of his late countrymen, and when all had departed, he took his position in an armchair, in alluding the apartment in which the corpse was deposited, and there remained, with sleepless eyes, the coming of another morn.

"I'm a-dy," said Sambo to the Yankee, crossing his legs, as he sat in his office in the willow arm-chair which he had been occupying, and from which he could view at the open door of his office—the one in which the company lay, attended by the Indian boy, and the red-headed girl—Levi said, "I'm a-dy, I'm a-dy, I'm a-dy," and then, placing the forefinger of his right hand against the door-post, and then taking his hand across the palm of his left, as if to call up his memory of what he desired to recollect. I was called from the police's house, at twelve o'clock, and walked short tracks to old Sambo's, when this here poor chap, this scoundrel, fell—I mean this here poor critter that's in there now, that I has brought in to his own house—so far, that you can't I'll swear to it to the day of the M'Kinley's—"

This question was addressed to the negro servant of the house, who had entered the outer room unperceived, and was seated at the piano in the chamber. The appearance of the black man at the door had however, and probably rightly, been observed by the red-headed girl, and the rest of his party, who were sitting in the outer room, and

Putnam Pomfret could not but be impressed with pity for the evident anguish of the servant, visible in every movement of his aged countenance.

"Dagummum is 'Merican—is de gummum?" asked the negro, as he looked beseechingly at Pomfret.

"Yes, and no mistake—American to the back bone, poor critter!" returned the Yankee. "And I declare your master was a beetle too much so, too, for these people here Maxkins. Jerusalem! if a chap don't know their tricks, the pisonet scrupints ain't wuz to get along with."

"Massa was murdered; he nubber kill his 's'elf," said the black, solemnly.

"There you're rayther too fast," replied Pomfret, "savin's how I was one of the fast that saw him, just as he lay, with the pistol in his hand. No, poor critter, I hadn't anythang but love your master, but depend on it, he didn't kill himself with his own individual hand, and no mistake."

"Massa nubber kill his 's'elf," repeated the negro, shaking his head.

"What on earth do ye mean, critter?" asked the Yankee, somewhat nonplussed at the pertinacity with which the old servant persisted, as he thought, in doubting the fact of his master's self-destruction. "What ar' ye drivin' at, with that 'ere word of yours? Don't ye believe a fellow when he tells you just what he has seen, an' nuthin' else?"

"Dagummum 'll pleaze 'em to do de durnin'?" insisted the servant, in a despairing tone. "But de nubber master know'd Massa Charley. Massa Charley, I'z tellin' them, he ain't de heart to kill a chicken, much less a man, and to break poor missy's heart, well, we all de family to get us in de mornin' foreb'rumore. Oh, gorra me, whar'll poor missy go? I'm afraid she'll n'vr live to see de day when they'll get 'em to 'em—they'll murder missy an' de old master jist as day like Massa Charley. Oh, gorra!"

"But I tell ye, your Massa Charley won't murder nobody but one."

"Spec's you think so, sir, but you don't know all 'em's circumstances. Berry like, Massa Charley had de pistol in his own hand an' pull de trigger. But who laid his hand, sir? Who stan' behind Massa Charley an' say 'em to do it?—it's you'self, Massa Charles Clinton?"

The negro, as he hurriedly uttered these words, fixed his eyes upon Pontefret with a glance which at once satisfied the latter that a rare intelligence was concealed under the old slave's sooty skin. He divined, also, that a mystery rested behind the apparent natural result of such a congenital upon a ruined gambler's despair of retrieving his fortune, and the suspiciousness of the negro made him suspect that some man-Egypt had not had been exerted upon the unfortunate young American, leading him to the course of life which had ended so fatally. The Yankee, therefore, with a tact which was natural to him, prepared to glean from the black whatever might be of importance in his instantly conceived design to investigate the cause which had rendered in so sad a catastrophe to a fellow-countryman.

It was this curiosity that prompted this resolution upon the part of Purman Pontefret; for, besides that his earnest sympathy had been aroused by the fate of the young gambler being an American, he had learned enough through the impudent exclamations of the negro and female attendant on the previous night, to be aware that the soldier's sister was left alone and penniless in the foreign city, a position which, to the Yankee's mind, gave her at once a claim to all the service and assistance he could render her; for Pontefret remembered but a derry-cheeked sister of his own in their far off New England home, and he resolved, like a true-hearted American as he was, to hold him off ready for a night that might be necessary in the defense and protection of his fair young countrywoman.

With this motive alone, he began to consider the best method of learning the position of the family with whom he had become acquainted so suddenly, in order that he might give them information to their immediate advantage, if necessary. But he was prevented from an exact question about the old servant by the sudden entrance of the female attendant, who kept guard the night with her young mistress. Her appearance at once threw the negro into a state of intense alarm; and he clutched his hand to the sword which he had

to meet her, exclaiming:

"Oh, Lucille, where art thou? What you have done I will tell George, I will, my master will like to know if you."

"Hush tongue, Hannibal. Ma lemonselle is to have sleep, it must be she is not disturbed. *Oh, ciel!* What a night I have spent! *Quel horreur!* *Oh!* poor Master Charles! Zey have skin—zey have kill'd him dead, and we are all lost—*perdus!*"

Lucille, a lively-looking young mulatto girl, with a truly French air of coquetry about her, seemed utterly broken down in contemplation of the sad event which had taken place. She wiped the tears fastidiously from her pretty eyes with a corner of her embroidered apron, and continued her wretched exclamations :

"*Oh, ciel!* what shall we do? Mam'selle will die! All is lost!"

Pomfret for some moments remained silent, not knowing how to check the passionate grief of both negro and mulatto, who evidently grew more excited in witnessing each other's perturbation. At length, however, the Yankee vented his address to Lucille.

"It's a mighty dreadful case, an' no mistake," he began, "and calls for a sight o' philosophy and pluck, to bring common sense into the bargain. Here's a young fellow, a real fine, free-hearted American gentleman, from New Orleans—comes out a stranger in this 'ere land, a thousand 'tural sight too good to walk its streets. —That's Master Charles Clinton I'm talking 'bout, ye know, don't you, Hannibal? Come ye, Miss Lucille?"

"Oh, gorra!" ejaculated the negro. "An' when the gruman left away, an' cheat I out o' him, aye, and his too. Oh, gorra!"

"And by a villain—*Oh, ciel!* What is he? —Mam'selle so delicate—fly away from, every day when he comes. Ah! he is traitor. He is z-a-c-e of all!"

"Master Charles trusted his friend to death, I suppose," said Pomfret, suggestively.

"I think Massa Falzone no friend at all," replied Hannibal. "What for you call him friend o' Master Charles? General good friend no make him think he can do what he can't. Devilish friend no man, 'tis. —Charles Clinton, come to de gramin' land, what he say when he come? No, no, Massa Falzone is no friend—'s a d—d scoundrel."

shoot hisself—all for spite o' missy. Eh, Lucille—don't you tink dat am de reason?"

"*Vérité—fa fa fa*—I have not one doubt. Mam'selle can't bear ze sight of Monsieur Falcone. She drive him away, take, many times away; Mam'selle absent—dat à Châlons, when Monsieur Falcone come."

"And M. Charles didn't like that, did he?" said the Yankee.

"Not much. He was—what you call *triste*?—oh, like Monsieur Falcone—*triste*—*triste*. Truly, I do know, he think him one brother; oh, Hannibal?"

"Oh, you know dat M. Charles fool him all de time?"

"And when Mam'selle refuse—le lace she will not go ze S. with him, zen Monsieur Charles and Monsieur Falcone all together, come, twenty time; and Monsieur Charles drunk—*drunk*—what you call *tipsy*?—drunk; an' zen Mam'selle we press much, implore her brother dat he will no more think z Charles—*triste*, and he will return with us all to New Orleans; and Monsieur Charles prend—*comme ça*—*that's* to do all zat mam'selle desire?"

"Pshaw! now, he could not keep his promise," said Penfield.

"The devil did tempt him, when Monsieur Falcone come again. Key drunk ze wine, key try hard at Mam'selle's ear. M. Charles take care he will take good care of his friend Charles—*triste*—*triste*—*triste*? What god damn has taken! Voila!"

The maid, saying this, plied to the open door of the room at which she lay the body of her late master, and then, dropping into a current of tears, covered her face with her arms and sat down on a bench of boards the negro Hannibal, who had been a black slave. Penfield had no time to call him an explanation of all the circumstances connected with the death of Charles Glinton. He saw that she also had been a slave, and influenced over the destiny of the boy. An Indian, and that he knew, nothing of the character or action of the Falcone to whom both Lucille and Hannibal had sold to ameliorate their misfortune, he could not help fearing that some nefarious scheme had caused to Glinton's

run. The fact of the sister's dislike to her brother's friend, her tender solicitude, and the manner in which its influence had been counteracted, satisfied Pomfret that his countryman had been led on, step by step, to indulge in dissipation and play, until, ripened for destruction, he had fallen a victim to his own desperation, urged on, doubtless, through the evil council of his false friend. When this conclusion settled itself in the Yankee's mind he resolved at once upon such measures as would at least preserve the darling girl from any peril that might arise from her imprudent situation. Pomfret's resolves never waited long before their execution; so, rising from the arm-chair where he had passed the night, he enjoined upon both servants the necessity of keeping strict watch of the house, and above all things of preventing their mistress to sleep as long as possible.

"For," said he, as he rubbed his moist eyes with a common mankerchief, "the poor girl'll have to bear a mighty load when she wakes, and I'll do no harm if she gets all the strength to help her. So just keep watch of the house, and let your young master sleep a little longer. I'll call after some one who kin do ye all now, and then I'll—"

So saying, Pomfret fixed his broad-brimmed hat securely upon the back of his head, and shaking hands with the two young servants, set out from the house of straw, just as the sun was beginning to struggle between the high walls of the ancient houses, or through the branches of the trees which lined the walk over which he briskly proceeded.

And as that humble-looking Yankee, in worn and travel-stained habiliments, hurried through the streets of Mexico, who passed him would have believed in the probability of such a shabby individual, however good might be his heart, having any practical power to recover or protect even his own property from a felon. Nor would any Mexican, however, have credited such a foolish prediction as might have been made at the time—that this friend of Yankee Putnam would him self be the first of his countrymen to the walls of the proud capital in Mexico—before many a year had passed away. So filled was an idle wall about the city by the meanest beggar of the capital, that he could not tell what was to come, the Mexican and the foreigner

greeted him with a look of contempt or indifference. And the Yankee heeded, as he went, neither grandee nor beggar. He was thinking of the suicide and his desolate young sister.

CHAPTER V.

PADRE HERRERA IN THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

In the back room of a single-storyed, squalid-looking house, or rather hovel, situated on one of the principal streets, and surrounded on every side by imposing palaces, under the shadow of which it seemed to shrink and hide, like a scared biggar child in some gorgeous cathedral—in the solitary back room of that pretenting hut, sat a man who was neither old nor determined by his features, since in their expression was observable that mixture of youthful freshness with the wisdom of mature years, which distinguishes some countenances, to the manifest perplexity of the best physiognomists. Nevertheless, though it was difficult to settle upon the man's exact age, it was not hard to conjecture, by the look of his features and determination stamped in his every lineament, that the priest, for such his vesture denoted him to be, was neither of a harsh nor common nature. His eyes were bright and intelligent in their gaze, his cheeks ruddy, and his brow clear, but neither deeply marked with wrinkles nor swollen with midnight vigils. The capacity for action as well as resolution was plainly apparent to an observer in both the countenance of the old father, who now stood by the wall of the hut, as he sat on a block of wood which answered for a chair, and who, as if in a fit of one of his mirths, which he had evidently overcome with the help of a bottle.

The number of the old bottle, as well as the exact liquid it contained, was obscured by the priest's head with a greyish cloth, which suited very well the dim light that entered the hut through an undazzled aperture in the rear wall. The morning breeze, for the sun had just risen, slightly agitated the wreaths

of smoke, and blew aside the stray locks of hair which grew on either side of the padre's tonsure—but otherwise a character of intense quiet and repose was preserved within the hovel, in which the occupant seemed to share equally with the place.

But a sudden tap upon the outside of the wooden window-pane, followed by the appearance of a great-squared hand held at the aperture above mentioned, awoke the good priest from his reverie, and caused him at once to renounce his cigarette and to turn his head toward the newcomer. A glint of pleased recognition accompanied the movement, and he said, in a low voice:

"Benedicite, my son! you are stirring early this morning?"

"Yes, and I calculate I was stirrin' late last night, padre. And that's the why and wherefore I'm here now. I want your advice, padre, seein's how two heads are better than one, and I want you to come straight along, if you can come conveniently, for I'm in a hobble, an' no mistake."

"The saints preserve us, son; you are not in trouble with the police, I trust?"

"O nothin' o' that sort, padre. 'Tain't for myself I'm afeard, no how. Put Pomfret can lose his own now, now, I tell ye. But if you want to save as nice a critter as my wife wore calico, from some concerned chap that's been a-poppin' ag'in her, and gittin' her brother shot, and axin' like plain generally, I reckon it's your time, and no time, to, padre, beggin' pardon, if you don't want to come along and push along!"

The worthy priest smiled at the Yankee's earnest expression, and proceeded to interrogate him further in regard to the object which he had in view.

"There are, I fear me, some dark places the world over for poor young lads," said the priest, after a short silence. "But to Almighty may permit us to be the instruments of comfort in them. We must learn to live in the flesh, and to die well if need be, Sister, instead of dying ill."

"I know you kin do just about what you please with Minister Herrera, padre. I'd like to see our old friend Ximenez, who's got to be great now, and that's our old friend Chico, Chico Ximenez—I'd like to see both on 'em stand right side o'

you this minute. Jehosaphat! them two fellers are the sort o' critters to walk into rascality, an' no mistake."

"The friends you name are noble spirits, and would be of much assistance to us in any crisis. But Montagne seldom leaves his retired estates in the mountains, and Colonel Nunez, as you know, is with the army. And we may not need them, my son. Perhaps our fears are magnified in regard to your countrywomen. Of that we shall soon learn more. Let us depart at once."

"Pahre, I ain't afraid o' any harm while you're about. By the 'tarn'd. hokey, I know you're clean grit when occasion requires. I only kin I o' hanker arter a sight o' Captin' Nunez, because he's a loss, and no mistake. As you say, pahre, there's no tellin' whether we shall want any help at all; but let's be moving spry."

The padre at once proceeded to the door of the hut, to join his American friend, passing through the front room of the house, and only pausing a moment to speak to an old olive-faced woman, his hostess, who was bustling about. Then unbarring the frail outer door, he emerged into the street, and set off with Pomfret.

The noise and bustle of daily life was beginning to fill the streets along which the two took their way, and on arriving at their destination they found that the officers of the police were busily engaged in making an examination of the premises, interrogating the servants, and with all the airs of authority, placing the seals of official interference upon such cabinets and desks as they deemed the repositories of papers or documents likely to be of importance in the event of further action on the part of the district magistrate. At the appearance of a priest, they bowed respectfully, but continued their interview with Pomfret, as his eyes glanced hurriedly around the apartment, which was the room that he had occupied alone during the night, and continuous to that in which lay the corpse of Glinton, saw that another was present besides the two weeping servants of the household. This was the said old's sister.

The maid's face was pale as marble, and her eyes heavy with a bitter grief. She sat in a large arm-chair near the window, wrapped in a loose white robe, secured about the

waist by a blue sash, and clasped upon her bosom by a small, golden cross. In her dark-brown hair was twined a wreath of yesterday's roses, drooping and withered now, that like the sweet child whose brow they had decked. She was indeed but a child to look upon, for scarcely seven years old, as had passed over her, and the light of youth still, until this fatal hour, been bright within her, and a clear, the bright and sunny smile more natural to her than sighs of sorrow. But now, oppressed and bending beneath the weight of her bereavement, with the image of her bleeding brother ever present in her thoughts, she sat motionless in the silent chamber, her eyes shaded by her hands, her head sinking down and disorder'd upon her neck, and a deep abstraction of sorrow in her whole appearance that showed how deeply her spirit was crushed, how irretrievably was the day of her despair.

The padre, as his pitying eyes rested upon the poor girl, felt at once, with the quickness of a good heart, how vain would be all common modes of solace for the anguish of the bereaved one. He was well read in his religion, and to read the pages of many a book of grief had been his duty often in the past; for the priest's existence had not been dreamed away in cloistered idleness. His experience, gained in many lands and among various sects and qualities of men, was narrowed by no arbitrary application, and his charity, expanded by his acquaintance with suffering and calamity, was something more than a mere matter of cerebral dream; it entered into and radiated from his every act and word, so that unconsciously he won the trust of others, and administered consolation because he had first suffered himself.

It was therefore with true charity that the padre now approached the stricken maid to comfort her through the sympathy of his soul. While Putnam came in with the chief official, to answer some inquiry of his, and a complimentary address to him, the padre softly laid his hand upon the bowed head of the young girl, and said, "D—d it, I sorrow with thee."

The tone of the priest's voice and the gentle pressure of his hand aroused the maiden from the swoon in which she had fallen. Her own hands were clasped together

before her eyes, and she lifted her glance to the speaker's face with an expression of such mingled fear and anguish, that it penetrated at once to the priest's heart. But his own look, so mild yet earnest, so full of love and pity, yet withal with such an influence of strength irradiating from it, seemed to arrest the current of the mourner's reflections. She cast a moment upon the stranger's features, her troubled countenance evading naught but perplexity and wondering emotion, her eyes tearless, as if the fountains of their grief had been wept to desert dryness, and then, with an inexpressibly touching movement, shook her head in silence, as if in utter abandonment of every hope of consolation.

"Nay, my child—my poor child, I would not see a pair in one so young. I know the sorrow which oppresses thee is stern and difficult to bear. But it is not amid flowers alone that the path of life conducts to heaven. Behold! through chequing trial cometh sweetest mercy; and He who tempts to win to the hab that hath been shorn, will tenkely look down on thee, my stricken one."

Blessed tears! what heart would break not, were their presence now denied? What nature, steeled though haply it may be against all chances of the world's hard field—what self-reliant spirit, proudly mailed in triple panoply of harsh resolve—what soul encased in custom's adamant, but yet will own the healing charm of tears? They are the medicine of desperate grief; they quicken better moods in baser hearts, nail in it the rough, unkindly will. But to the good they are like angel-food, that beautifies and strengthens while it fills—the balm of sorrow, that with healing charm overflows the heart, and waters in its mold new germs of living hope.

Such tears, such blessed tears, now sealed the sister's heart, raising up on the bitter memory of her brother's death and drenching it of that blood-stained horror which had well nigh driven her mad.

In the meantime, Poniatoff, after satisfactorily replying to all the questions which the Mexican police thought proper to inflict upon his good-nature, received a permit from these worthy officers, authorizing him, as a countryman of the deceased, to take charge of the preparations which might be necessary, both for his funeral and for the protection of such

property as he might have possessed. In obtaining this liberty, the Yankee owed much to a paper which he exhibited, signed by the President of the Republic, vouching for his respectability, and for his Excellency's confidence in him, as one who had rendered good service to the cause of freedom. Though the sight of this document occasioned but an expression of wonderment on the part of the Maximilian officials, inasmuch as our friend Pomfret's grotesque and eccentric appearance did not tally well with the character or spirit which were indicated in its contents, yet, as there was but little disputing the authenticity of the paper, the Yankee was divested at once in the eyes of his examiners as a personage of no common pretensions—perhaps some creature of the half-breed republic, on an *incognito* mission to General Herrera. Consequently, it was with great show of courtesy and respect that Pomfret was invested with authority to bury his countryman; and the Mexicans, in taking their leave, invoked nations and saints to aid the "noble American" in his disinterested service to the dead.

The Yankee, relieved from the presence of the officials, and remarking with gratification the soothing influence which his friend the padre had exerted upon the mournful sister, turned his attention at once to the steps requisite in order to perform the last duties to poor Gilman's remains. Quickly beckoning to the two servants, he led the way into the inner room.

The soldier's body lay where it had been deposited on the previous night. A mantle concealed all but the features, which were also hidden by a white cotton handkerchief, bound around the forehead. A dark stain was visible upon this handkerchief, but on the corner might be perceived, inwrought with figures of lace, evidently the work of some graceful female hand, a small snuff-box, in which were embroidered the same words that Pomfret had read upon the lock he found upon Gilman—"To my beloved N. O., 1847." Alas! that the gift of beauty and grace should now be devoted to so sad a use.

Upon the heart of the corpse was a small wooden box, for which some pious enthusiast among the Mexicans had had there laid, perhaps in the hope that it might be handed to

the soul which had been evoked so suddenly to its account.

Pomfret remarked the emblem, but he did not remove it, nor smile at the superstition which had caused it to be placed there: Protestant by education as he was, our American could yet respect the sincerity of another's faith, though he might not himself subscribe to its dogmas. He prepared to make the necessary dispositions for interment, giving directions to the two servants, who appeared to recognize in him a friend on whom they might rely, and in a brief space, the poor victim to a ruinous passion was arrayed in the habiliments of the grave, and stretched upon the last couch which he should press above the green sod that must, sooner or later, be the couch of all.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO GAMESTERS AND A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST.

"GABRIEL FALCONE! we must trust each other!"

These words were spoken by the master of that house to which the gambler had been conducted. A night's sleep had operated to restore the young man's strength, but his nerves still remained under excitement. On opening his eyes, he recollects at his bed-side the acquaintance whom he had made so reprehensively on his own part; and it was in response to his first exclamation that his singular host uttered the words which begin this chapter.

"You would know who I am?" continued the man. "Let me first assure you that your father knew me well!"

"What know you of my father?" demanded Falcone sharply, lifting his bloodshot eyes.

"What the world knows partially," answered the elder— "that he treated a woman and was foiled, as he deserved to be!"

"Do you speak of my mother, sir?"

"Most assuredly, of that lovely sinner!" rejoined the host, with a cynical laugh. "A mother who was, indeed, Gabriel

Falcone, who could abandon her infant child, and elope with a lover from her husband's home!"

"What right have you to speak thus of my father's unhappy wife. And for what purpose do you recall her name?"

"I said, Gabriel Falcone, that we must trust each other," replied the other, deliberately. "Listen, then, to what I have to tell you! But, firstly, do me the favor of clearing this scar!"

And the speaker, loosing the belt of his dress-coat and baring his side, disclosed a white, oval scar raised on the darker skin. It was apparently the mark of a bullet-wound.

"You see this token of a skillful duellist. You may be proud of it, Falcone, since it was your father who did me the honor of putting a ball within hair's breath of my heart."

"You are, then, the man who—"

"I am that poor devil of an abominable wretch who failed to incur the jealousy of your good father, for no reason whatever, save that my face was a hand-some one, and your mother a woman of taste. In fine, I am Don Ricardo Ramos, of whom you have heard go up and down since your babyhood, and who now has the pleasure of being very much at your service."

The flippant manner in which this scoundrel was talking, did not conceal a certain bitterness of tone which caused Falcone to shudder. The young master's career of luxury and dissipation, culminating in his rebellion against his master, and the stranger's silent and secret knowledge of his affairs, were a sudden field of recollection to the young vent.

"I have heard of you, Don Ricardo Ramos," said he, "as a villain—a traitor—a wretch, who—"

He paused, as if reluctant to complete the sentence, and parents with their disgrace.

"Go on, Gabriel! Proceed on! You said 'Proud and saintly—whatever that lady is—she may be—I will not spoil such a eulogy—'"

Falcone turned abruptly, and snatched out his umbrella and his coat, which lay upon a chair near the bed. Then, taking from its pocket the purse of money which he had received

the night before from Don Ricardo Ramos, he flung it angrily against his host's bosom.

"There," he muttered, fiercely, "there is your gold—what I had better have wrested, a prize, from your dead body, than received as a gift from your accursed living hand."

"Bravo! Very well done, Gabriel Falcone," remarked the host, with unmoved voice and manner. "I see that, among other accomplishments, you have a truly dramatic way of expressing your sentiments. Allow me to admire you, Gabriel Falcone!"

"It becomes the devil to sneer," muttered Falcone, wrinkling in his brows, and scowling at his companion.

"Nay, nay," cried Don Ricardo, suddenly changing to a tone of apparent feeling. "Let us be friends! I was wrong to speak as I did; and now hear me, Falcone, while I declare to you, on my life and soul, that in the wrong done your father, I was guiltless! In this body now," he continued, contracting his forehead, "I carry about the bullet which he lodged in my breast; and I may be pardoned if the constant presence of such a memento makes my language sometimes rough. I never won the favor of your brother! I was the object of her dislike; and when she flung with another to a foreign land, her conduct was as much a mystery to me as to her husband. This, Gabriel Falcone, I swear to you!"

Don Ricardo watched the effect of his address upon the young man, who, weak from his exertions, had fallen back upon the piano. Receiving no response, he went on:

"I have done! You may friendship in consideration of that which I owe to your father, who, in his injustice to me, deserved him ill! And, in truth, Gabriel, how can the above insult upon my friendship compare with the wrong done to you, an innocent son?"

"What have you by that?" asked Falcone.

"Simply," rejoined Don Ricardo, "that, while you should have in possession of the entire wealth left by your father, his only stipulation of your inheritance induced him to transfer the bulk of his fortune to a younger branch of the family. Is it not true that your uncle and his sons enjoy vast revenues from the Falcone estates, while you, having squandered a mere pittance, now stand stripped of every thing—a genteel beggar of the capital?"

Falcone fixed his eyes on Don Ricardo's calm face, with a bewilkered stare. Then, striking his forehead with clenched hand, he muttered, in a savage tone, "By the hell! what you say is all true! But how know you that my father disinherited me? Is it not true that the estates in my uncle's possession were left to him by a distant relation?"

"It is as well, my poor Falcone, that you should know it to be as they say, inasmuch as the will which stripped you might have been vainly contested. Lawyers, in a *clan* of *crocodiles*, might have raked in your last dollar!"

"By heaven! I would have torn his ill-gotten wealth from this gray-beard uncle of mine, though my own life were the forfeit."

"You could not have done so," returned the other, drily. "Answer me—how many days have passed since you called on that gray-beard relative, to implore a simple and most enormous loan, and were most cavalierly rebuked, though the good Don Jorge did not know the money was to be staked *à monté, peradventure!*"

"Devil!" cried Falcone—"you know that I was rebuked!"

"The devil ought certainly to know a great deal about your movements, good Gabriel! But I make no claim to omniscience, and shall refrain my interest in your affairs to its very natural cause—old friendship for your family!"

Again the man's brow contracted, and his lips writhed. But Falcone took no note; for, though he might have extended his hand, as he did, saying:

"Parlame, Don Ricardo—I did you wrong in my anger. If you are disposed to serve me, I will reward you, but can afford to reject your friendship. There is my hand again!"

"And now, as we are friends," said Don Ricardo, "I will serve you. But first, let us, as I said, exchange a few words. Tell me, Gabriel, why the death of that man of mine so strangely affected you. Did you know him?"

"Know him?" echoed the young man, with a sudden tremor evident in his voice. "Yes—he was a sort of a fine companion—that is all."

"A spendthrift, drunkard, and gambler; fair representative of Mexican youth."

"He was no Mexican," rejoined Falcone.

“What! a European?”

“No—an American from New Orleans. Doubtless his name is now well known to all the city—Charles Clinton.”

“Clinton!” exclaimed Don Ricardo, with a start.

“Ay—Clinton! Did you know him, that his name makes you?”

“Doubtless I have met him or his kindred in my wanderings here. The name, it is true, awakens vivid remembrance, which yet may have no connection with this youth. Was he a stranger here?”

“He resided here a few months, at least.”

“Well—why do you stop?”

“What do I know of the wretched suicide?” cried Ricardo, in a fervent tone, as if he would shake off a painful recollection. “How many kindred souls have preceded him in the same course and end? It may be my fate yet,” continued the young man, gloomily.

“Well, despair not yet, Gabriel,” said Don Ricardo. “I saw you from one o’clock last night, and I thought I could find a way to repair your shattered fortunes. For the present, I request that you will remain quiet in this apartment, for you are yet weak and require rest. On the table yonder is a book, by which you may amuse your attention. By and by, I intend to call you into a退室 (retired), and till then will I leave you to yourself.”

With these words, Don Ricardo Ramey stepped to the carpet, and lifted the pure of mind which Falcone had taken from his chair, deposited it, without further remark, upon a small table near the bed-side. Then, with a parting salutation, he retired from the room.

Falcone followed to the departing footsteps of his host with an expression of mingled distrust and satisfaction apparent in his countenance, which did not leave him. He reclined his head fully upon his pillow, and, with a melancholy smile, looked about him, and then, as if unwilling to stir from his couch, closed his eyes. Once, only, did he open them again, and then, as if deeply moved, the walls and doors of this apartment appeared to him to resound with the louder chattering of the master, Don Ricardo. A broad couch of black, polished wood, stood in the corner, and, at the end of the same fabric stood in another

cooky, and the heavy arm-chairs, a massive couch, half covered by the thick window drapery above it, and the bedstead on which the guest lay, that seemed a relic of the Spanish invasion, all bore token, not more of an antique taste than of a somber disposition in him who possessed and preserved them.

Falcone noticed every thing in a brief glance, and then, smiling bitterly, muttered, as he fell back upon his pillow:

"This man was my father's friend and enemy, so all right has vouches. Whether his friendship for me be worth my preserving, is to be seen. At present I will profit by his advances, for, by the fiend, I have no other resource."—the gamester's eye fell upon the purse which Don Ricardo had placed upon the table near him—"truly, it was a silly spark of passion that prompted me to dash his glass at the man's feet. I must be more cautious in the future, for such jewels grow not on every bush in Mexico." And now, continued Falcone, while his eye glowed with an expression of daring resolve, "now that Clinton's death has bereaved his lovely sister, it may be that Gabriel Falcone will not be so unkindly come to the maiden—provid I that his purse be full. This Don Ricardo shall assist me then, at least."

So saying, the young man, brooding over the means of furthering his schemes of villainy, snatched the purse from the table, and placed it once more in the garment from which he had taken it. Then, apparently exhausted, he closed his eyes as if to sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOUBLE FUNERAL AND A REMOVAL.

The sun was descending upon the city, and the scene of Mexico's incomparable beauty—filling the air with fragrance, and itself in a flood of yellow light, blended with the lofty churches and turreted convents, and golden palaces which glittered like a fairy panorama. On the beautiful Lake Texcoco,

skimming amid the still attractive remnants of its once magnificent floating gardens, the light boats of pleasure-seekers darted to and fro, and the souls of romance-lovers, won by the beauty of the approaching evening, dispersed themselves at various points, enjoying the cool mountain breeze that floated mysteriously from the *Sierra de Juárez* of the north.

Wherever beauty reigns, it is tempered, perchance enlivened, by sorrow—and so, upon the quiet loveliness of the Mexican evening, when the perfume of a thousand flowers imparted a delicious aroma through all the air, and when the flute-like warbling of a hundred golden-plumaged birds unite in a dreamy strain of music, till the atmosphere seemed brimmed with its myriad wealth of harmony and fragrance, it was no wonder that a shadow intervened between the setting sun and those whose hearts were fitted to enjoy its brightness.

A funeral cortege emerged from the city, near the national bridge, and slowly took its way toward a quiet burial place, where thick-entwined groves, girdled with vines, and small openings, betidled with flowers, marked the chosen spot of all for nature to receive her wearied children in the bosom of their mother earth. Slowly and solemnly over the highway and through a shaded road diverging from the lake, and up a gentle rise of verisure-covered hills, the funeral procession proceeded. It was not a large one. Scarcely a dozen persons composed the followers of the simple bier; but there were flowers upon the dark pall, and tears of heartfelt grief had watered them.

Behind the funeral carriage, a small calèche was driven by an aged negro. In it were a young girl clad in plain blue silk, and a man, who, by his garb, appeared to be a priest. Another vehicle followed, in which were seated two other persons, male and female. Under either vehicle, alternately, walked a large dog of the Newfoundland breed. He followed the body of his master. This funeral cortege was the last to carry the body of Charles Clinton, the sensible author of the *Latin*, and the mourners, few but relatives, who accompanied sister and her two servants, the resolute Yankee William Pomfret, and the clergyman, Padre Herrera.

Slowly, until they reached the gate of the quiet burial-place, the procession passed along. No word was spoken, but the

priest held the trembling hand of the young sister within his own, and the maiden felt that the sympathy of a sister's kind and tender nature was sustaining her spirit in its hour of trial.

At the entrance of the graveyard, on that hand, followed by a single carriage, with but two persons in it, joined the cortege of the suicide, and together, for a moment, the train proceeded to their destination. Two of a grade, hardly side by side, were to receive the bodies of two, who in life had been strangers, but were here to be united to sleep quietly in the same earth till the time when the "earth shall put on incorruption." Padre Herrata, as the name of the deceased parson opposite to that which bore the remains of Gwinnett, recognized in one of the occupants of the carriage which followed it, a clergymen known to him to be an esteemed and worthy brother of his order. He saluted him with the customary salutation, at the same time pronouncing his name, Fray Pedro, and was responded to by a low "Peace be with you." At the same instant the eyes of the other person in the carriage, a young man of perhaps twenty years, who was clad in simple black, were raised to him, and their gaze fell upon the face of the minister who had by the side of the priest Herrata.

At once a singular change was visible in the countenance of this young man. His cheeks, for a moment, became flushed with apparent excitement, his lips trembled, his eyes dilated. Padre Herrata noted his惊异, and looked inquiringly toward Fray Pedro. The latter, however, was descending from the carriage, and did not notice the regard of his brother priest, but, so soon as he had reached his station near the hearse, from which the minister and his assistant were now entered in like manner. The funeral portion of the funeral dirge was still played over the hearse. Hamill, the negro, held the end of the dirge, which included the form that he had often recited in his childish days, in their happy American home, until the solemn-looking Fray delivered him to the care of his wife Lucille, the negro's wife, and Padre Herrata, who, when he had left the carriage, had thus at the rate of four feet proceeded, and two inches less, over a distance of about

neighboring graves, while the mellow sunbeams shone through the thick-leaved oaks, and the birds sang their gay requiem for the dead.

Nor were the wailing inhabitants of the graveyard the only children at the summer's grave. Fall and winter bring us from the lips of the two priests that implore the church for the dead with all its church ritual, and particularly to be seen on the occasion of interring a corpse. Up the road the lonely church of the Virgin called out to us, and in it the bell tolled the woe of death, and tolling only death; the tollers, and we, in the soil but still in body of the buried dead. Major I went upon the quiet evening air. And, while I went on, and we were alone with the stillness of night that filled the western skies, and while the sound of bell and trumpet of priests went together until it went through the minnows of the dark church down the river—the voices of old, the bell and the, and mannered in its tones to the language of the far and lonely.

The girls were near each other—the last to walk out
left still as they sat the socks upon the collar. Was it strange
that, as the girls sat close together, the two children were for
long silent? And when I asked the girl who had come with her? Was it strange
that she did not answer? With eyes dimmed with tears, she
had come with her mother, her mother's hand in hers, but the
mother had gone, the mother had left her, had gone by
the path, had followed the path with her own? She
had left her mother, but who left her, her, but in truth
it was the young woman who had followed the other hand.
She was filled with tears, her breast heaved and sank
upon her bosom, and with a cold shudder, she shuddered the while
and laid aside his cap, and laid it to the wall behind her.

At this time, at the church of the Virgin Mary, the
Emperor Charlemagne, and the Pope Hadrian, drawing
near unto him, gave him the keys of the city of
Constantinople, and the keys of the city of
Rome, and the keys of the city of Jerusalem.

“You can do it now — it is the right time to do it.”

his face with a look, half of terror, half of interest, he disclosed the portrait of a young girl, which, in every lineament, was in the "counterfeit presentment" of the maiden by his side.

"'Tis she—it must be she!" he murmured, weakly.

"What means this, brother?" asked Padre Hernata, turning to his fellow-priest. "What youth is this, and what would he with this mourning maiden?"

Fray Pedro glanced for a moment at the picture which the young man held, and a sudden light broke over his features.

"I see—I see it all!" he cried. "Alonso—Alonso! Did not this picture belong to your uncle—the good Don Tomé, who now lies at our feet?"

"Reverend father, it did. 'Twas the last gift that I received from my uncle's hands. It was the portrait of one whom—"

"I know it all, my son," rejoined the priest, "I was your uncle's confessor—his only confidant, save it might be yourself. That picture is the likeness of one whom Don Tomé passionately loved in his youth, and who died in a foreign land. You, brother Hernata, well know the sad story, though many years have passed since the unhappy Don Tomé Minas—"

"Donna Maria Minas?" interrupted the young man, with a sudden start, as she heard the words pronounced. "It was my mother's name."

"None may doubt that who look upon this portrait of Donna Maria and then upon your face, my brother," rejoined Fray Pedro. "Doubtless the hand of Heaven is in this meeting. Mark! this picture, long preserved as the dearest treasure of his existence, by one who dedicated your mother's memory to the forgetfulness of all the world—"

"Save only me," cried Alonso. "My mother's name was ever to me all that a father could be."

"He was a just man," said the priest, solemnly, "and his reward is not to be doubted. Oh, Padre Hernata—"

This last exclamation was succeeded by the sobs and sobs of agony made by the good priest that the poor maiden beside them had fallen into a state of insensibility. She still lay upon the sward and clasp'd the portrait of Donna Maria in

her hands, her eyes fixed upon it with an intense earnestness. But no rays of intelligence fell from them—they were fixed but expressionless. The unhappy child, overcome by conflicting emotions, had swooned as she gazed, and now, as the two clergymen looked toward her, they beheld that two ready assistants were supporting her sinking form—on one side was the Yankee, Pomfret, and on the other, the youth Alonzo.

"Dead—dead! Oh, no—she is not dead!" cried the latter, his countenance growing ghastly with apprehension.

"Let the gal have air, or she will be," rejoined the Yankee, with his prompt understanding and quickness of action. "Gently there—she's only a faintin'—and poor innocent, she's had a hump o' trouble—enough for one weak critter. Jes' stan' aside and she'll be all right again in a minute."

Saying this, the stalwart Pomfret with his right arm brushed every one aside, and lifting the maid's slight figure in his left, as a mother would her babe, carried her in a moment from the grave to a small marble basin, where the dripping of a cool fountain was making music in unison with the song of birds.

Alonzo followed closely the Yankee's steps, while the two servants, Hamblin and La Belle, seized with dread that some new misfortune threatened their unhappy young mistress, gave way at once to violent grief, moaning and clasping their hands together, and calling upon their mistress to revive.

"Oh, Miss Teresa!" cried Hamblin, passionately, as his skin was tingling with terror, "don't a go way from us—don't a die, like Miss Charley—like a dadda' missy—don't a die!"

And La Belle, running back and forth like one distracted, echoed the negro's plaints in her own half-broken exclamations:

"Oh, did I not dare not to? Oh, what shall we do ourselves? Save my sweet mistress—take her to—my dear Madame—Miss Teresa, and let poor La Belle die once, three times—one dozen times!"

"My good child, trust in God. He will mind on your master in this hour of trial," said Pedro Herrera, striving to check the maid-servant's vehement grief. "Look! even now the maid revives! Yes! her eyes undoes to the light."

"All is over! I am so glad!" cried the girl, a torrent of tears falling from her eyes, while Hamblin uttered a long cry of joy.

Mademoiselle Teresa had indeed opened her eyes, once more restored to animation by the cool water with which Pomfret had bathed her temples and sprinkled her pale face. But no consciousness appeared in the dim look which she cast around. It was evident she did not recognize any one.

"I'm mortal Ward the poor gal has taken it too hard," whispered the Yankee to Padre Herrada. "Her spirit is now gone when she get here, and this long affliction has overcast her mind completely. Poor little girl—she is as tender as a hummin' bird, and no match."

Uttering these words, Pomfret could not forbear to kiss the maiden's head with the cool fingers of his hand; and Iwella, kneeling beside, clasped her hands and buried them in her mistress with the most endearing tenderness. At length the numbness which had terrified all so much, began to leave the young girl's frame, and a slight flush reddened her pale cheeks.

Recovering in some degree, she was taken up by the maidens, and they returned to the city. Pomfret, Alvaro, and Pepe Pedro followed in another carriage; on the way Pepe Pedro recounted the story of Glinton's death. Alvaro listened with deep interest. Destiny had brought him together on the occasion of his uncle's funeral, the daughter of the man he loved in his living thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

DON RICARDO RAMOS AND HIS MUSE.

Two days had elapsed since the funeral of Don Tomás and Glinton. Teresa, the dead girl, had been buried in the crypt in the crypt-chamber into which she had followed her beloved in her grave, awoke at length to life with all its fullness of human realities. The good Padre Herrada was overwhelmed by his kindly attentions, and the faithful servants, attached to their mistress by the strongest ties of early attachment and her peculiar gentle character, were untiring in their efforts to bring

service. The Yankee, whose position as regarded the favor of President Herrera had been made manifest to the officials on the occasion of their domiciliary visit, was permitted, as a countryman, to exercise the duties of an executor on such property as the deceased possessed at the time of his death. This, on examination, was discovered, as both Padre Herrera and Penfret had anticipated, to be scanty enough; for the unfortunate young man, involved in expenses during his half a year in Mexico, and induced by his evil associates to risk his means on the uncertain chance of the gaming-table, had been stripped of the last dollar upon the fatal night which had witnessed his death. Save a few jewels presented by Teresa herself, the furniture of their dwelling, and a small supply of money which the sister had retained, nothing remained of a comfortable competence which a few months before had been the fortune of the two orphans.

Two years had passed since the death of that mother whose unhappy history had already been briefly adverted to. When, in spite of the misfortune which had made her life wretched, Donna Maria had reluctantly quitted her home, and cast her lot upon the wild world, she was yet innocent of infidelity and of her husband. Through Padre Herrera's discreet and judicious guidance, he had impeded the unhappy wife from obtaining a divorce, and the people of Don Mattoch, it is true, were scandalized by her conduct in her early years, but she had not been bad. However, in the last year of their acquaintance, she was a bad woman, in whom the moral and physical deterioration were evident. The change had been however far less than those of character which had entered her heart.

But you, in your benevolent nature, will then wonder upon whom by whom she was as much seduced with execrable success that Padre Herrera, Mr. Dan R. and Roderick, the two executors of her husband, had called a writ upon the deceased wife, and resolved to make her his victim. As in illness and infirmity I was filled with grief, he sought to interest me in Donna Maria's favor, by all the arts in which he was an adept. With perfect sympathy, he kindled the interest with which I had evidently treated her—with all the indifference which I had done

a brother's privilege to call him to account. He shrewdly made it appear that he sought to restrain Falcone in his evil courses, when, in reality, he was urging him constantly to the worst dissipation. Donna Maria at first but consented to the words of her husband's friend; and it rapidly, though violently sickness which had attacked Don Tadeo, her youthful friend, had deprived her of the gentle support which his truthful character ever afforded her. She could not believe in such baseness as was a portion of Don Ricardo's very being, and consequently she admitted him to her society, and often to her confidence, until the villain, grown daring through her unsuspecting kindness, ventured to avail his treacherous design, and proposed that she should fly with him from the capital to one of his estates in eastern Mexico.

The first intimation of Don Ricardo's in this regard to the wife; but when, with crafty calculation, he told her his schemes, and, as if secure of her compliance, proceeded to paint, in glowing colors, the life to which he would lead her, the pride of the woman roused her to indignation. She was of a high-spirited and ancient race. The blood of the Moors, her family, was reckoned as the strongest of all Spain, and it was the pride which could not break their resistance, that had induced her parents to give their child to the young Falcone, albeit the latter boasted not a drop of Moorish blood. Don Ricardo Ramos, rich though he was, had no claim of birth to back his pretensions, since he was of the mixed race which claims as much affinity with the noble races of Mexico as with those who claim them as their legitimate descendants. This circumstance might, probably, have had little weight with Donna Maria, had her heart been won over in the man who addressed her; but she was not a simple man from her presence—she did not apply the word *simple* of fifty anger from her flashing eyes, nor did she with accents of withering contempt.

"Don Ricardo, you talk like a poet; you paint like a painter like an artist. A woman would be unwise to let such an enthusiastic lover for a husband who I consider."

Don Ricardo threw him off on his hands on the floor of Donna Maria, and seizing her hand, covered it with kisses.

Only one stipulation was made by the lady when she

until they should have arrived upon the lover's estates, near Monterey, no further mention must be made of love—no closer intimacy exist than that of the past. Don Ricardo regarded it as a whim, but Donna Maria was inexorable, and the arrangement was made. All things were prepared by the expectant lover—the lady sent her private jewels, kissed with a tear the infant child of Falcone, which, though she lived not its father, was yet dear to her—and then gave her hand to Don Ricardo Ramos, for an elopement, while Falcone, absorbed in his worthless career, discovered not the double treachery of his wife and friend.

As the lover lifted the beautiful wife to her carriage, in which she had stipulated that she should ride alone, he attempted to kiss her lips, but she repelled him.

"Don Ricardo—your promise!" she cried, gayly. "Will there not be time enough when we reach your home?"

So Don Ricardo Ramos contented him, if with mounting his horse, and riding beside, and behind, and before the carriage, wherever he could catch a glimpse of the closely-veiled face of his lovely prize. Thus he carried Donna Maria Falcone from the capital.

But all fine things have an end. One morning, when Don Ricardo awoke before his host, at the small hotel, where the horses had been put up for the night, and after glancing with a satisfied look at his traveling mirror, hurried to take his morning salutation to the fair Donna Maria, and congratulate her upon their journey to Monterey, which they should reach during the day—hurrah! Donna Maria was not to be found. His own horse was still in the stable, but the horses and carriage of the beautiful lady, as well as the lady herself, had disappeared.

"Where is she? In the fiend's name, an answer!" cried Don Ricardo to the trembling host.

"The—lady?" stammered the man.

"You—know—yes?" roared Don Ricardo.

The host did not know; she had ordered a relay of horses, and departed during the night—did not desire that the gentleman should be disturbed, but had left a note for him.

"A note! The fiends—give it to me!"

It was brief, but quite explanatory.

"Don Ricardo Ramos:—I return thanks for your escort which I have accepted thus far upon my journey. You have been deceived in my character, as I was in yours. Though I am an unhappy woman, I can not be a guilty one. Farewell forever!"

Don Ricardo Ramos stormed—took his horses and rode to his estates—scoured the country in every direction. But tidings did he gather of the fugitive, save that rays of light had been taken to the confines of Texas. At Matamoros all trace was lost of Donna Maria Falcone.

So Don Ricardo returned to Mexico, to be a wretch of the deepest, and half suspected of murder—to be received with his friend Falcone, and receive a bullet in his body as a lasting memento of that affair—and finally, to leave his native country and become a wanderer in foreign lands, vainly seeking to discover the woman who had rendered him all his miseries, and on whom he planned to revenge himself. But he saw Donna Maria no more.

And she—beautiful, proud and despotic—what had she to anticipate for her? Truly, an end that came to her, though in it out of remembrance. Flying at once from her husband and Don Ricardo, she crossed the American border and reached a military station of the United States army. Here she found honorable protection, and became a friend with a young Creole of New Orleans, who, with his sister, was about to return to the States. She gladly accepted the name which they called, and accompanied them upon their way. The young merchant became passionately enamored of her, and Donna Maria did indeed that her own heart could not make a confidant of the turbulent young, who were of a nature, and had grown warmly attached to her. Madame de la Poer was commonly called Mrs. M. in New Orleans, the young boy and girl of the family of which occurred soon after their arrival in New Orleans. Her proposal was accepted, and Don M. M. married Madame Gilette, and afterward the mother of two young children, one of whom we have seen in the chapter before last, in the presence of his unknown brother, Gilette M. The other, a daughter who was but slightly younger than the deadly swoon into which she had fallen at her unknown brother's grave.

But of the union of Clinton and Donna Maria was commonplace, their life was a happy one. For nearly twenty years they dwelt together in decent private life, unmindful with the world, but content in their own family enjoyment. Maria looked back upon her brief relationship to Falcone, as a bad dream from which she had soon awokened. At times, the mother's heart reverted to her child, deprived of her maternal care, and often she regretted that she had not taken the babe with her upon her abrupt departure. But she recollects that under the circumstances such a thing was impossible. To carry with a lover, while she yet preserved a husband's child to her bosom, would have seemed hypocrisy, and though never openly admitting other than the step actually taken, still she had known before-hand how fraught it was with danger, and how could she have impelled the life of her innocent babe in her own wild expedition? But it was past—she had become another's wife, and she strove to banish the recollection of the intimate tie which linked her to her native land.

Thus years fled swiftly by, and the two children of Maria's second marriage, Charles and Teresa, grew up loyally like their parents. How many, how bright were the happy hours around the fair young brother and sister! How often the husband and his fair wife fondly gazed upon the time when they should be models, and their offspring, young and beautiful, sustain and claim their father's name!

But such was not to be. Reverses came suddenly upon the mercantile Clinton. Disease assailed him daily, and at length, from wealth he speedily passed him. It cost him to him more than a cent a day. He suffered not for this on his own account, nor did Maria; but they loved their children, and with natural pride, could not bear them in the poverty to which they had been accustomed in a former day. But in this case Clinton had no brother to fall back upon. Clinton had the bulk of his property in the hands of the speculators, and the result of his distress, when the speculators would not sell up with the husband and wife, was that Maria and her girls, motherless, had to depend upon him. The husband, which now dwelt in New Orleans, made his appearance just at the moment when General Grant was about to take an important turn. It came to the mother and her

children, and by her husband's side. It deprived him of his Maria, and with her he left his wife. Glinton did not survive the loss of his wife.

"He tried

To do with at her—He did not—indeed."

In one short month the two slept side by side, and Charles and Teresa were orphans.

At this period the brother was at college—the sister at school. They remained in their respective places till their education was completed, and then received the small portion which had been secured for them by their father's thoughtful provision. It amounted to but ten thousand dollars, but Teresa was confident that it would be a great fortune for them, at least till her brother, on whom she depended, should exert by his talents all that their parents had given. And the days of youth!

Charles Glinton had often heard his mother speak of her native land, though he, like Teresa, was unaware of the early events of her history. Nevertheless, the recitations of the descriptions he had in childhood of the land of Maria, and, consequently, when, with his sister, they had made themselves a future course of life, the first object of their choice the neighboring republic was the object of their choice. Teresa, who believed her brother's judgment to be sound, according to Charles's proposal, the two decided to let him know that he designed making such arrangements as would enable him on his return to pursue his studies in America, a consequence of the Mexican and Indian tribes. Thus the two children, for they were little more, left their native New Orleans, and set out on their intended visit to the capital of Mexico. What afterward occurred I need not tell. Charles Glinton, possessed of enough money and credit to be a wealthy, soon found himself involved in the meshes of the Mexican young men—the leaders of the band of the Falcone—was led into dire straits and perils, and he was

"A thing

Over which the raven flings his fatal wing."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLOOD OF THE MINAS

Two days, as we have said, had passed since the funeral of Charles Clinton, and in that time Captain Pomfret had ascertained the exact state of the surviving orphan's worldly affairs. With his hallowed education, he knew then what little cash and effects, save her jewels, Terri a Flores had at her command, and the two slaves, Hamblin and Leveille, had they not been already emancipated by the Mexican laws he knew would never be discharged by their southward主人。 Consequently they must be provided for, and our Yankee was not slow. Much in person and mind, though his shrewd business, that was already making itself felt in many commercial circles of Mexico.

Pomfret, finding himself in Mexico, with but little else than his native thrift, and some services which it had been his good fortune to render to the existing government, as his capital, had nevertheless managed, through the assistance of some influential Mexican friends, to engage a position of trust in the custom-houses, which, requiring his services abroad, was now broken, had kindly and liberally returned for skill and enterprise. At the present time he discovered that his presence in an eastern province of the Republic might be of advantage to him, if in point of profit, and it required but little consideration on the part of the worthy North American, to determine that it was his plain and bounden duty to see his young countrywoman escort safely to her distant American home. Therefore, with as much red knight-errantry as ever existed in the days of chivalry, our hero embarked for Ixtlan. The defunct and posthumous of the orphan's property, well known to his direction, not only all preparation for the journey, but the care and expense of the lady's passage paid for him. In this quality of executor, Pomfret presented an unusual sight to all in this manner, though few would have cared much for it, accompanying her with a escort

pecuniary personal expense. Pomfret, however, as disinterested as he was unpretending, used his exertions only as a plausible covering for his concealed liberality. He knew very well, that, while Teresa would shrink from receiving benefits at the hands of a stranger, she could very well be induced to believe that, as executor, he was but providing supplies from her deceased brother's effects.

"And how on earth," quoth the Yankee, to himself, "on earth am I goin' to administer, unless I got somethin' to administer with? That gal and them others are bound to live, and while Putnam Pomfret's got a dollar, he ain't a soul to let a lady suffer—partic'larly when that here lady is a countrywoman, and a dern sight better than any of them Mexican faminines that ride round the mtns. Is this purty angels. *Jehosaphat!*"

In accordance with this resolution of the learned Yankee, everything went on as firmly in the house of Mrs. Clinton, as the servants went roundly about their business, at the same time making the necessary preparations for leaving the city; and Putnam, without pausing or a moment's repose, concurred him. If a "black" could be of service, he joyfully supplied him, to make every thing about the young mistress as comfortable as possible.

Paulre Herrata obeyed all this, for the master well knew the character of his American friend, and also the state of the unfortunate Clinton's affairs. He said, however, as he noticed the melancholy manner in which Putnam seemed to all that was necessary, and pressed the hand of his master, in his fervent manner:

"Signor Pomfret, you are a nobleman, and I know you no more as I know you better. If you have truly lost all the friends it has given me."

"Paulre, you jes' talk so, I can't understand you. I don't a doin' more than my duty, and I can't help it, I can't help it, and I had to do the same for Mrs. Clinton."

"It would be well if some of the old world and dead lands of earth were as sure of me as I am of you, Signor," murmured Paulre Herrata to him, as he stood by the Alamo Valley, the neighbour of Don Tomás, at the foot of the mountain, from the funeral where he had been a spectator of the

with the daughter of his uncle's cherished friend, remained in a state of mind entirely new to him. He wondered that his thoughts dwelt not so much upon his recent loss as upon the singular revelation it had caused. The image of the beautiful Teresa, as he had beheld her kneeling by her brother's grave, and then reposing, pale and deadly, upon the breast of the faithful Lucille, presented itself constantly before his memory, and he tortured him with apprehensions concerning her safety. Early on the following morning he was at the house into which he had beheld her borne still wrapped in sleep, and there learned from his new acquaintance, Putnam, the name of the maid's master. He lingered long that day, and again in the evening he presented himself. Thus for two days, the young man, finding that love for the almost unknown girl was born with him, a part of his being, pondered upon his uncle's sad story, and treated his illumination with a thousand unique uncertainties.

"Ah!" he cried, as he pulled up and down the floor of the apartment which had been the studio of his friend's relative, "and if it should be another, I feel that my uncle's fate will be mine."

But on the evening of the second day, came down the hand of Teresa. Alonso was informed by Hamill that his master was no longer in the city, and that he had gone to the country, leaving the house, equipped for the small town he intended to its rear.

"And the man is still at the hotel?"

"A gentleman?" cried Alonso, smiling. "Ah, a friend of the old days, or Penfret, probably."

"Yes, but Miss Penfret is away to-night, here will Penfret remain, but he's a blockhead. Didn't you tell him so?—I mean, General! I wish he had told me so, indeed."

"He is evidently no friend of yours, Hamill," said Alonso, smiling at the boy's frankness, "but he may be then, after all. The old man in question might prove to be a true kinsman of Teresa. Will he remain long with you, in this?"

"I don't know," answered Hamill. "Missy Teresa no likes him nuther."

This piece of information quickly roused Alonso, so

he quietly took a seat, in order to await the appearance of the Yankee, while Hannibal departed to attend to his duties. In the mean time, we will take the liberty of introducing the reader to the little inner parlor of the dwelling occupied by Teresa Clinton, where that lady now reclined, upon a sofa, near the open window. She was very pale. A long white robe, modestly trimmed with narrow lace, and clasped at the bosom with a small brooch, in which was a portrait of her brother, covered, but could not conceal the graceful symmetry of her form. Her hair, parted over the white brow, hung in thick ringlets upon her shoulders, in one cluster of which her left hand had buried itself, supporting her head. Her right pressed tightly against her heart, which was beating with evident excitement. Her eyes were dull as, and very bright.

Opposite to her sat Gabriel Falcone, his eyes fixed upon hers with a look which was manifestly intended to express much tender sympathy, but to which the dash and frankness of the young man imparted an uncertain and inexact atmosphere of character. But his voice was low and alluring.

"I loved your poor brother deeply, S^rora. I admired his noble qualities—his earnestness of nature—"

"His treacherous nature, which made him to be my deadly foe, sir," cried Teresa, her voice quivering with rage and irritation. "Oh that Charles had never come to this city; he would not then have fallen into such villainous snares."

Falcone looked with amazement upon the young widow, whom he had never heard speak harshly or unkindly to her, before. He bit his lip, in the effort to restrain his anger, and answered:

"Truly, the S^rora is subject to one who would serve her brother—who would serve herself."

"Even I my brother—serve me!" cried Teresa, slightly elevating her voice, but abating it again in a moment. "S^rora Falcone, you can serve her best by serving no more of him, and leaving him at dead and gone."

"Nay, S^rora," murmured the Yankee. "I'll speak in a singularly mellow tone, "I should be fain to say, "and I might

my duty at this time. Do not condemn me that I sympathize with you, Sônia Glinton—so lovely, so unfortunate—"

"Come, sir. This is no time nor place for flatteries!" said Teresa, suddenly rising from the couch on which she had partially reclined, and folding her hands upon her bosom.

She spoke in a voice of determination, and her eyes, dilating into brilliancy, were fixed undauntedly upon the intruder. So might have looked her mother, Donna Maria, upon the man who proposed her dishonor, had she not chosen to conceal her indignation. But the blood of the Minas was in the veins of both, and though Teresa's glance dwelt so fixedly upon his bold countenance, the eye of Gabriel Fadone fell not, nor changed from its look of seeming sensibility.

"Señor Fadone, I am young, and the ways of the world are unfamiliar to me. I know not what wicked prompting in your heart led you to tempt my trusting brother to his ruin. I know not what new design of evil you may harbor against an orphan girl. But, in my soul, Señor Fadone, I feel that on your head lies the blood of Charles Glinton. You, Sir, entreated, betrayed him to his fate. But for you he had been innocent, and I had not been desolate."

The mitten covered her eyes, as she said this, with both her hands, while her heart beat tumultuously. Fadone, however, as he was by smallness and dissipations callow to the world, was not his conduct suddenly frayed, and Teresa, after her fainting, continued:

"Now, sir, be satisfied with the misery you have caused. I implore you to leave me not with your companion. Depart from this house, Señor Fadone, and let me forget that you exist, ere my memory urges me to curse your name."

Teresa still wore the libertine with all her mother's pride befitting upon her features, yet tempered with a sadness that made its exhibition still more impressive. But Fadone was not one to be thus repulsed.

"Sônia," he replied, blandly, "it would be impious for me to believe that such gentle lips could utter a curse—"

"Has I not said that this is no period for flattery? Señor Fadone, hear from these lips that I hate—despise you! Hear, when I declare that the bitterness of my brother's death, is that he died by following one so base as you. Now, sir—

away! Dare no longer to pollute the air which he breathed with your false-hearted words. Go! or my mind shall hear me utter my contempt!"

The young girl's form swelled into majesty with the indignation which filled her spirit, and Falcone, while he waited under the evident loathing which she manifested, could not but feel that she was a woman born to command admiration and respect. Nevertheless, with the hardness with which he held a large portion of his character, he did not even then lose all of softening; the obduracy of her feelings caused him, for Falcone believed him all skillful in all the ways of womanhood, and smiled within him. "What the devil! that such a child as Teresa could be profane against his art and experience. Therefore, though the last words of the maid had fallen heavily on his ear, he neither chose to answer them nor to reply with their repetitions. He simply let his chair fall suddenly upon the floor, and leaning his forehead upon the open palm of his hand, remained for a moment silent in a deep meditation.

Teresa remained standing, her slight body firmly supported by the window-frame, and her head slightly leaned. Her eyes still rested upon Falcone's face, and the stern which had a moment since wrinkled her delicately-chiselled lip, yet gave a determined expression to all her features.

At length, as if by a quick impulse, Falcone sprang suddenly from the chair on which he sat, and the maid fell full upon one knee; and ere they met, clung to him her hands within his own, before she could make any effort to prevent the action. Then, speaking in a language which he well understood, sincerely pleased him in his judgment, the young master proceeded with an energy of speech that constrained Teresa's attention to the smallest of his subtleties.

"Listen to me, Sora," cried Gualdi Falcone. "You I hear not! I love you—. I truly, truly do not! Think you that with such a feeling in my heart, I could have reviled an ought against your brother? Truly—what sort of man? Not! by all the saints, I swear as truly as you, off the head of one so dear to both of us. But now

Señor! drive me not to despair—urge me not to become all you have declared me to be! I love you, I adore you. Beware, are you rose within my nature other and different feelings—”

Fall the pen, I, for he caught the bright eye of Teresa, and cast it with a look of such defiant scorn that it almost caused me to turn into his soul. The daughter of Dona María had forgotten her wednesday, her suffering, her sorrow, and every future risk in malle-baúny, with a smile. Her brown and lips compressed, while the light that blazed from her glorious eyes seemed to irradiate her entire countenance, she lowered a moment before the gambler's vision, and then, throwing her hand beneath her white robe, where it was clasped over her bosom, drew forth a long, thin-bladed dagger, which she uplifted suddenly, its point aimed at the heart of the villain.

The young gambler was brave and confident, but the boldness of Teresa's action startled him. He immediately sprang to his feet, and retreated a step from the threatening woman. But a moment afterward he seemed to be ashamed of his apparent timidity, and with a smile that mocked as much of his menses as humor, snatched out his hand, as if playfully to put the stiletto aside.

“Basta, Señor—I withdraw.” Gave said the timid maiden, pointing to the door.

He snatched his hand abruptly, advancing his hands to the maid's wrist, and snatched it so hastily that a loud cry escaped her lips.

“Ah, pretty one, you can not harm me now,” cried the young man, mockingly.

But scarcely had the cry which she uttered fallen Teresa's ear, when the door of the apartment was opened, and the form of a young man appeared upon the threshold. It was Alfonso Vellón. A simpleman, called to dinner over to the house, the residence of Teresa Gilman, though he knew not who she really was. The door was still clasped in the maid's hand, while her wrist was completely by the stiletto's grasp, and from which she was strangled to the heart, her look of mingled pain and terror, and I Alfonso at once that the other gentleman was no such magnet in the house. So,

without staying a second for further information as to the merits of the case, our young student sprung forward at once, and dealt a heavy blow at the forehead of Falcone, which made the gamester not only release his hold, but reel for a moment, like a drunken man.

"Señora—Señora! are you hurt?" cried Vallejo, in great agitation, as he turned to look upon the maid, without appearing to think any further upon the man whom he had struck. But Teresa Clinton, more watchful than her husband, saw that Falcone was about to rush upon his assailant.

"Take care!" she exclaimed, suddenly, and thrust herself forward, with the stiletto raised in her hand, just as the instant when the infuriated gamester was about to attack the student. "Back! Señor!" she cried, interposing herself between Falcone and the young man. "Unto thyself alone, I permit you to go uncathed; but go not on!"

Giulio Falcone's features writhed with passion, and the foam gathered on his lips.

"Is this the favored one?" he cried, laughing. "How may I ever be the victim of Teresa Clinton?"

Alonso Vallejo heard the taunt, and sprang forward, the fair and who had turned pale. He ran at the gamester, and struck him on the face of the man's nose, so hard, that the blood began to flow. Falcone was of course struck, and sought to rally from the young student, but the energy of the blow which he would in a moment have delivered had struck him, and he succeeded in gripping firmly the maid's slender waist, like the exercise of his muscles. Then, by the aid of his own strength, he bent suddenly and cast her violently upon the floor. The next moment he was in danger and lived it above Vallejo's breast—until the brave Teresa Clinton had discovered the issue. Quick as thought she sprang forward, and, seizing the gamester's hand, struck his wrist so hard, that he was compelled to let go his hold, and she, in turn, struck him upon his head, caused him to look up, and she, in turn, cast him to the floor. The maid then sprang forward, and, with the strength of Pale Herradura, who, with Leonidas, had just entered the apartment,

"Don't kill the cu--he ain't with it," cried the Yankee. "Johny hat?" he continued, looking adoringly upon the mulatto, while, with all the exuberance imaginable, he inserted his fingers beneath the collar of Falcone's coat and une remissibly dragged that gentleman from the prostrate Vallejo, "Johny what! Miss Tere--you're clear grit, an' no mistake. Regular American spunk, by kingdom! Who's afraid, I'd like to know, when our gals can protect themselves so fashion? Here, you black-nuzzled, yall r-skinneled chap, I dunno who you are, or where you come from muther, but j--'s you walk straight this time, an' if you want to settle, call on Putnam Pomfret."

So saying, while Alvaro Vallejo aroo to his feet, and Teresa, clinging to Padre Hernández, seemed about to relapse into the deadly state from which she had so lately recovered, the impudent Yankee, confining Falcone as with an iron grasp, thrust him forebifly out of the room, and through the outer apartment, to the open hall-door, where stood the negro Hamill. Here, releasing him, he said, quietly:

"You know my name, and somethin' o' my natur. So, goodby, an' keep your distance."

He now ground his teeth together, and cast a malignant look upon the amazement Yankee. Then clutching his hat and coat, which the grinning negro extended to him, he rushed from the house.

"Gerra! dat cu--de ticket!" cried Hamill, clasping his hands together, while the Yankee hurried toward the inner room. "D--n Miss Pomfret ain't that I do debbil hi--hi. Oh, Miss Lettie! what for you no be here, for see the fun?" he said, of the mulatto girl, who now made her appearance. "Miss Falco! he--he wallah papers. Gerra mity, how he go!"

"We go?" returned the girl. "Do you think I not see him? M--m! I am full of fear he will come back and kill us all. *O ciel!*"

"N--n, you f--f! Miss Pomfret cut him up, like claw cat... Gerra! He make on'y one mouf-fal ob Massa Falcone!"

CHAPTER X.

THE ACTORS IN A COMING DRAMA.

The position of public affairs in the Mexican republic, at the point to which our story has arrived, was extremely critical. The administration was far from being popular; a large party existed adverse to the toning-down policy pursued by President Herrera, and ready for a change of rule, even through revolution. Consequently, Putnam Pomfret, whose residence in Mexico had made him thoroughly familiar with the political landscape's continually shifting, was not unprepared for a communication made to him by Pedro Herrera at their next meeting.

"General Herrera has resigned, and a new government enters on the field at once," was the substance of the information imparted by the priest.

"Then, I deduce General Herrera's day is over at a discount," said Pomfret.

"What do you mean, sir, by his day being over?"

"Oh, nothing extra. Only, as I said, I suspected that Herrera wouldn't hold on to the helm, when he got to the helm, and as that fellin' General Purdon's bound to come in XI, you see, I called him last to get our written papers from Herrera and start for the frontier, short order. You know, padre, that Master Purdon ain't been friends with either you nor me, and he'll be just likely to pull out all停 apples, if he gets it off his hands in the crystal. What do you say about that, padre?"

"I admire your frankness, and I am very grateful to you. It would be no easy matter for me, as one of Herrera's friends, to procure a favor from General Purdon. I trust the new administration will be a peaceful one. So I rejoice to hear that you intend to return to Mexico, ignorant to your people. Your honor, sir, will be highly respected."

"Here are the papers, signed and sealed for Putnam Pomfret and S. M. Gilson, family and friends," he went on.

Yankee. "So you see, palo, you can just go along, as one of the family."

"Yes," said the priest, pausing thoughtfully, "we may have other enemies, especially on our track. Are you aware that the young man whom you encountered yesterday is a ~~new~~ partisan of Paredes?"

"That's all right, I'm told now! Ask pardon, palo, do I say it with impudence, for an enemy?"

"Do not be confident, my good friend. Times like these are apt to bring in strange friends. But do you know who this young man is?"

"I don't. If he's a deserter that's probably my man, I'll be him to you, who Paredes Pemfet is?" returned the North American, shaking his head. "However, palo, I do know who he is, the vermin is, anyhow—"

The priest was about to speak, when the appearance of a dark person at the corner of the room caused him to stop him, and to hasten to meet the newcomer, who stepped in with the exuberance, and with both hands extended.

"And here I say 'Hello boy'!" cried Pedro Hilario, taking the Yankee in his arms, while Pemfet stepped forward to him, and bowed it emphatically.

"Good morning, boy friend!" said the priest, and he took the hand of the Yankee, that he had just received, and said,

"The Yankee is here to stay, and he'll stay the Yankee is here to stay, and he'll stay, while I say to the priest, 'Good morning, Pedro Hilario, who you do to up in his country, with the children and the parent."

And Pedro Hilario was in his element of intimacy, as he had left his friend—his son, son and grandchild, son and grandchild. Silvery and rosy they, yet fragile, the small flower of this young man's small life, epithet of the small flower. He was clad in a light suit of green, the green of the hills and the plains, as it had just stepped, the green of the hills and the plains. A woman sat, with her back to the wall, crossed his road head, that was the road covered with tufts of gray hair. All together, Pedro Hilario was a man for men to love and for rivals to envy.

"But you are pale, my son. You bring not the brown hue of health from your western home."

"I must seek it elsewhere—perhaps in foreign lands," answered the young man, smiling with a sad expression, which did not escape the priest's notice.

"You are unhappy, Anselmo," said the padre, tenderly. "I will not ask you why—perchance I do not need to ask. But why do you speak of foreign travel? The present is no time to leave your native land."

"Are, then, the rumors that I heard on my way hither, to be believed—that the republic is threatened from abroad?"

"The countrymen of our friend Pomfret are covetous of the spoils left by Montezuma," answered Padre Herrata, with a smile. "Is it not so, *Señor*?" he inquired of the Yankee.

"Well, I call'late," replied Pomfret, "that if Minister Sibley goes him mail, ther'll be the dooce to pay in Washington. Our people are nation karl to murmur when they're riz?"

"And under the sway of a war-party here," rejoined the priest, "who can hope that a conflict can be averted? But, in any event," continued Padre Herrata, clasping Zumozin's hand again, "there is but one course for you, my son—Mexico may need a few 'allies' against internal and foreign foes."

"And I s'pose my best course is just to make a beeline for the Rio Grande or Vera Cruz, quick'n'chain lightning," exclaimed the Yankee. "There's mighty few of your Mexican countrymen I'd cotton to, any how. There's Captain Zumozin here, and yourself, padre, and that ar' Captain Nuñez, who's a Colonel now, I callate, I allow you're all braves, and I'd stan' by you, ag'in the world! As you say, padre, Captain Zumozin is bound for to fight his country's battles, and there's many flesh in him, no matter what's the scummers! But, by thunder—" ejaculated Pomfret, suddenly breaking off, closing his both eyes, to hide their moisture, while he said, "I bin of Zumozin's band in his own—" I'd hate to have my harm comin' to you or Captain Nuñez. That's bad! I hope there won't be any war, after all."

"Let us pray that there may not be," said Padre Herrata, solemnly. "But, Anselmo my son, your arrival is unexpected. How is the Señor Montaguone, your father?"

"In go I health and here in the city," replied Zumozin. "He and my wife I met latter, and designed proceeding forward to Vera Cruz, whence we had nearly determined to embark for the United States."

"You will now, I think, ask your intention, my son. What you may be the form in which it shall come, certain it is that it concerns our country. Much have I heard, Aztec, of your noble acts upon your estates—of the improvement and elevation of your tenants, the civilization of the Indian population, and—"

"Say not civilization, Padre Herrata," interrupted Zumozin, "but that not such civilization as is manifested in this unhappy epoch, with its bigamists and hypocrites. No, my father, if I have failed, it is the will of those who inhabit the regions around Mexico City, it has been, thank Heaven, to cause them to obtain more completely the independence which they inherit from the ancestors I raise of Aztlan. I have not yoked these fine children of nature like oxen to the plow, confining them to a complaining, that their mighty hunting-grounds might be made still for speculation. I have not poisoned them with fiery drinks, nor taught them avarice and theft, and falsehood—those too early learned, too long practiced, by the wretched Indians of those lower districts. No, Padre Herrata, the noble men Indians with whom I so journed, eating at their tables, and sleeping peacefully in their humble abodes, look upon Zumozin, not as a trader, or a government collector, but as a man of new creeds; but as a man, like themselves, paying their tributes, recognizing their virtues, and strengthening their hopes."

The speaker paused, clutching with an effort the enthusiasm that had led him to speak earnestly upon a subject which of all others he had him in; for Zumozin's sympathy with the poor Indians was not the effect of philanthropy alone. He was of a race of the ancient race, a descendant of the Aztec, and when he had early run in details of their country's history, and of the conquest of Mexico, it is no marvel that the Indian tribes with which he had related the original inhabitants to a state of degradation noticeable among nearly all the native population of Lower Mexico furnished a theme

for his thoughts at all times, and often led him into eloquent expression of those thoughts. Dwelling of late among the yet uncivilized people who inhabited the almost impenetrable wilds of western Canada, he had learned that he could, it is true, by enticement, but not at all by force, draw among the scattered bands of Indian tribes, who owned but a common country, into a warlike, disciplined nation, fit not only for a successful, though vexatious, rule in dependence.

In his own character, Zunozia exhibited much that was equal to the skill and prudence of a statesman. Well read and educated, he could avail himself of all the accumulated knowledge in a laying his project to the rude comprehension of his savage friends—brave and valiant, he won their respect by deeds which rivaled their own—skilled in speech, and a master of the Indian tongue, he could move their council to noble exertions; and called to their counsels, he was recognized and revered by the most potent of the tribes as a true son of the earth, a kindly race who covered all the empire of Tenochtitlán. And when Zunozia, clothed in the romantic costume of the long-ribbed Aztec people, and crowned with a diadem of eagle plumes, stood amid the bold and warriors of those stern northern tribes, and spoke, in their native language, words of hope and inspiration—only less bold to the rude men the embodiment of energy.

"Oh, children of our dear mother, Aztlán!" he would cry out, stretching his arms above their bowed heads, "why do ye scatter like frightened men, driven before the wind? Why are ye stripped of your inheritance, and the land which your fathers held make now the fast hold of strangers? Behold! ye are numerous like the oaks of the wood; ye have strength and stature like them. But the ax of the pale-faced Spaniard will soon beat the tops of the oak; and his long-trunked gun—its broad head will be planted at the stranger's camp-fire."

Then, raising his voice, as he marked the deep silence which followed his eloquent words, Zunozia would break a strain of enthusiastic hope.

"Children of Aztlán—do ye not! Ye are mighty—ye are strong. Come up together in earnest! Let the tribes return after send their young men and their wife children. Let the Indian

no longer lift his hand against an Indian, but join in the great feast of union. Let us learn how the Spaniards march on the border. Let us have captains and an army like the strangers, and be together a great nation once more. Then shall we pull up cities like our Aztec fathers, and the red warriors of the land shall come to us, taking shelter beneath our power. And we will take all the tribes from the mountains to the sea, and be as one warrior and one wise chief, possessing the land of Aztlán, even as our fathers of Aztlán. Behold, and let the spirits of the dead look down upon us, and I hear their words, crying: 'Join! join! descendants of Aztlán! join, and be one great and mighty people!'

With such language shall Zamzin unfold to the tribes on the western border, the plan of an Indian confederacy that will be set up. In arresting the decay which he knew too well must be the fate of all the race, should they in their present scattered state, become more intimately known to the surrounding white men. The craft and violence which had ruled all the difficulties of the time, culminate to a condition of greed and rapacity in the extreme, would be equally ruinous to the young, up-and-coming Indians of the upper regions above the city of Mexicó, just as much as the numerous adventurers and traitors should be too numerously numerous to warrant their being every man a chief of the party. The object of Zamzin, then, is to set up, by the use of the plan of confederation, to collect the scattered bands, and remnants of nations into an Indian army, founded in point of number, and, governed by strict rules, and a well-kept up of their best disciplined military force, and taught the rudiments of a sound and useful education. The teacher was not Utopian; but, it is a school which produced important results, and which, if successful, at any rate, will be the Spanish had corrupted the Indians, and, which had prepared the latter from much of the misery which is now their lot in the interior of Mexicó.

The plan of confederation had been already twice considered by Zamzin, in the first among the Atlantic tribes, and the second, in the time of its being put into execution to recruit the army. In the only history of the New England Indians, which is that of King Philip's war, there is a total

annihilation to the English, and, in later times, when Tecumseh rallied the tribes, and fought the last good fight of the savage against the white man. In both of these aboriginal schemes of union, the lack of success arose simply from their having been devised too late, when the whites were become too powerful to resist.

Pomfret had listened to the earnest words of his friend Zumozin, with a countenance that showed how fully he appreciated the noble impulses which gave birth to them; and he rejoined with a glistening eye;

"Capting, you're a brick, an' deserve to be President o' this ere dod-rotted republic in jes' about no time, now I tell ye. If you want to bring about the real elevation o' yaller-skins, yes' you larn 'em to respect themselves, and make 'em feel that an Injin's good as a white man, if he's decent. A man's a man, and by jingo, they owned the land before any white feller ever set foot on't. 'Tain't fair to drive 'em clean out o' their own shanties, by thunder."

"Let us hope that the age of persecution is passing away," said Padre Herrata. "No nation is secure that is intolerant."

"True as gospel," ejaculated the Yankee. "But what course will our new government take, if it be true that Paredes is to have dictatorial authority?"

"I know not that such authority will be allowed him," answered Padre Herrata, "but this we must expect—war on the part of the United States, and civil war in Mexico."

"And who will wage the civil war?"

"A dozen ambitious chieftains, anxious for power—men who could be controlled but by one master-spirit, popular alike with the people and the army."

"You mean Santa Anna."

"You understand me, Alselmo. But, alas! the General dwells ingloriously abroad, when his country demands his services here."

"He hates the Americans!"

"More bitterly even than Paredes, who, besides, is not popular with the soldiers. If we would avert civil war, Santa Anna must return."

"But how? His life might be the forfeit. Remember Iturbide and Guerrero."

"The army will protect him, and Paredes must yield the command of that, in order to secure himself from a host of jealous rivals."

"It is true—Santa Anna must return."

"Go then, Anselmo, at once to Vera Cruz, as was your intention. Knock for Havana, where Santa Anna now waits, and tell him that his presence is needed in Mexico. He will return with you."

"But if in the mean time war should break out?"

"What better service can you accomplish, my son, than to bring another defender to our country? Santa Anna is ambitious; but ambition in one man is better than anarchy and dissension among all our chiefs. Anselmo, follow my counsel, as you love Mexico! Sñor Pomfret and myself leave at once for the frontier. Go you at once to Santa Anna."

"I will, my father!" cried Zumozin, rising and taking the priest's hand. "Farewell! we shall soon meet again. And you, my brave American," continued the Mexican youth as Pomfret came forward for a parting embrace, "if all your nation and all my countrymen were just and loyal as yourself, the name of war would never be breathed in their councils. Farewell, my friend, and may we yet greet each other under less gloomy auspices."

With these words, Zumozin departed, leaving his two friends to arrange all things for their contemplated journey from the capital. In the mean time, we must return to other actors in our drama of history and life.

The news of Taylor's occupation of the eastern bank of the Rio Grande had just reached the capital of Mexico, and had been made the subject of a public proclamation which was placarded throughout the city. It was considered as the initiative of war. Whatever might have been the numbers or vitality of the peace party of Mexico a few weeks before, ere yet Herrera's administration had succumbed to the demands of popular belligerency, there was very little manifestation of pacific feeling by an assemblage at the market-place. All lips breathed hostility to the invader, albeit some were pale in so doing. Anthems without stint were hurled at the perfidious nation which, it was asserted, had wantonly provoked and

pushed to extremity the quarrel, in the lust for aggrandizement and territory. Many priests mingled with the laymen of the crowd, exhorting the latter to die, if necessary, in their country's defense, and to pay out their last dollar to support a righteous cause; but none of these religious gentlemen offered of themselves to furnish contributions, though it was well known that the revenues of the State were insignificant compared with those of the church. However, if wanting in liberality, the good clergy lacked not in zeal, and dispensed the blessings of the church very generously, if they did not its funds.

Aside from the crowd, conversing in an animated manner, walked two individuals with whom the reader is already acquainted. They did not appear to be so much occupied with the general subject of excitement, as with their own personal matters.

"By St. Iago! whoever this villain of an American be, I shall not sleep well till I triumph over him," muttered the younger of the two colloquists, clinching his teeth as he spoke, and frowning ominously.

"You have your father's temper, Falcone," cried his companion. "But who and what is this American?"

"I know nothing of him, farther than that he rendered some service to the late administration, and was in favor with Herrera. He is called *Senor Pomfret*, and rumor says, he assisted in dispersing the brigand band of Joaquin Marani, some time since; a bold fellow, that Marani, who attacked a government *conduct* not long before he was taken."

"And a priest, Padre Herrera—was not such a one mentioned in connection with the capture of Marani?"

"You know all about it?"

"Doubtless! I have a good memory, and readily recall the circumstances. Moreover, I will tell you something else. The government *conduct* which the brigand attacked was designed, if captured, to supply the troops of General Parodi, then in revolt. This American and the priest, by preventing the plunder, saved Herrera's government from pecuniary ruin. You understand me, Falcone?"

"I think so."

"Consequently Herrera became a friend to both the worthy

gentlemen. But that is no reason Paredes should remember them with gratitude. You understand me now, Falcone?"

"Perfectly, Don Ricardo."

"Your path, then, is open. Paredes knows you for his friend, and I will give you full authority as regards not only this American and the priest, but as to all connected with them. Doubtless you understand me now, my dear Gabriel Falcone."

Don Ricardo looked in his singular manner, as he quietly gave intimation to these words, the effect of which on his hearer was powerful. Falcone stopped short in his walk, and seized his associate's hand.

"Don Ricardo," he cried, "you are the devil, I believe, for knowing every thing. I see clearly what you would have me do, and will at once go to the President."

"He will give you a commission, doubtless, which you can turn to account, my dear Gabriel. But, now, a word with you. This lovely maiden, Glinton's sister—she will very probably require new protection. Would she scorn to accept my hospitality till—"

Falcone looked in Don Ricardo's face, and marked the hidden meaning of his covert glance.

"You know she will be perfectly safe under my roof," continued Don Ricardo.

Falcone smiled in response to the sardonic expression of his companion.

"And perfectly at home," pursued Don Ricardo.

Again the two men exchanged smiles.

"And you will be quite at home, likewise, you are aware, Gabriel."

There was no need of further interchange of glance or smile, the two men in this understood each other as well as if hours had been expended in mutual explanation.

CHAPTER XI. THE PASS OF RIO-FRIO.

The lofty summits of the Anahuac Cordilleras glittered in the full blaze of noonday sun, like shafts of gold or emerald, and a thousand streams skirting their declivities, belted the plains as with ribbons of shining silver. On a lofty point on the main highway leading from the city of Mexico downward toward the coast and the eastern provinces, a small cavalcade had just halted, as if to rest, ascending one of the most difficult hills upon the route.

The leading persons of the party were two,—halting their horses on the highest ridge of the elevated road, looked into each other's eyes and with that mute communion revealed a world of thought. These two were a youth attired in a riding suit of black, and a young girl clad in garments of the same somber hue. They drew their horses near, side by side, and the young man, as with an involuntary impulse, clasped his companion's ungloved hand which lightly held the bridle of her palfrey, and pressed it in his own, while their mutual gaze dwelt upon the magnificent panorama beneath them.

Silence seemed indeed the fitting tribute to such a glorious scene as was mapped before their vision—silence which allows the heart to drink deeply of the spirit of beauty, until the overwrought feelings gush in tears. But a voice, low and earnest, from one of two horsemen, who followed immediately the youth and maiden, broke thrillingly upon their ears.

“It is a land to live and to die for!”

“Truly, truly, Father Herrata—a land blest by Heaven!” replied the young girl, turning her face toward the first speaker, its lovely features illuminated with deep interest.

“Ah! that men should desecrate such a land!” cried the young man beside her; “that injustice and oppression make it necessary for men to die in defense of a region so beautiful. Why can not peace abide where all is so peace-inspiring? Why must war enter here?”

“Would that it might be prevented!” said Padre Herrata,

solenly. "Would to Heaven we had yielded that unfortunate territory of Texas, which your people," addressing Poinsett, "have so long coveted. And doubtless had Herrera been truly established in authority—he not been threatened so long by Parry—a negotiation would have been effected without difficulty. But the popular voice is for war—it comes at Parry's voice—he does not at once take the field. What can we look for when the two republics are at strife, and thirst for one another's blood?"

The Yankee was about to speak, when an exclamation from the young girl, Terri, whose gaze had been directed back toward the city, caused the whole party suddenly to turn their heads. At first they looked anxiously for their attendants, Herrera, Laredo and a couple of half-breed Mexicans, who, with the pack-mules, were slowly toiling up the hill which they then ascended, riding fast. But ascended somewhat in advance. Not that it seemed to be apprehended concerning them, but an abrupt and lowering down fixed their attention and caused them with forebodings of evil. A cloud of dust upon the hill, and the approach of mounted men, who, from the speed with which they urged their horses on the incline, were drawn up to the direct heat of the sun, were evidently to pass out of sight in a moment.

"We are hunted and followed," said Padre Herrera. "There are your enemies, soldiers, doubtless sent to recall us. Let us to our speed at once."

"Or where is our horse—which shall it be, padre?" asked Poinsett, easily examining the priming of a horse pistol which he drew from one of his holsters.

"We can not ride—there are too many," answered the priest. "Let us try the speed of our horses, and those males can never be overtaken by a man. But stay—there is a better plan. Let us ride on a quarter of a mile, the road diverges, to the right of the hill—by a side road of little. Let Herrera lead off the horses, and go to the left, while we press forward on the right. We shall be followed by the pursuers, if such they be. On, now, my children, while I direct the road. Herrera is in his course, and inform him where to halt and await us. His road is direct, ours circuitous. Fly, my children!"

Saying this, Padre Herrata dropped behind to communicate with Hannibal, while the rest of the party, spurring their horses, dashed at once down the slope of the road, and plunget amid the thick woods that skirted either side. Alonzo Vallejo, riding close to Teresa, kept a watchful eye upon her mottled steed, and the Yankee, having satisfied himself that his pistols were in good condition, kept close behind, at the same time keeping his head half turned about to catch the first glimpse of pursuers on their headlong track.

Thus, through the vistaed length of shady forests and out upon the open fields, and over slope and acclivity, the three riders kept their way. A gallop of ten minutes carried them far down the mountain terraces, but they still preserved unabatedly the speed with which they had started. Suddenly the quick ear of Pomfret detected the sound of a horse's hoofs clattering behind, and presently a single steed, mounted by a female, came flying after the fugitives.

"What on earth hav ye done with yer mule? Where's the padre?" were Pomfret's rapidly uttered questions, as, wheeling about in his saddle, without drawing bridle, he recognized the mulatto, Lucille, who had now arrived abreast of him.

"*Mam'selle!* I am killed—of me there is no more," exclaimed the girl, almost gasping for breath, while the excitement of the race reddened her yellow visage. "The padre—he is not here—*ma mère chérie*—he has my mule. *Oché!* Mam'selle, I am ready to die with the fatigues."

Teresa looked back inquiringly to Lucille, who, with a great effort, for the speed with which she had followed the party had almost exhausted her strength, managed to explain that Padre Herrata had taken all his horses for the mule on which she was riding, and bidden her to press forward to join her mistress, while he, with Hannibal and the other attendants, should make at once for the Pass of Rio Frio, and there await the arrival of his friends.

"Rio Frio?" cried Teresa; "but where is that pass?"

"I know the place very well," answered Pomfret. "And if you want to drink some of the coolest water that ever flowed out of a natural ice-house, jes' wait till we get to Rio Frio. I've been there afore now, I tell ye, and in good company, too. And I tell you Miss Teresa—if any thing ever did

uzzle me, was to know how in time such farnal cold water comes out of a volcano! Jerusalem! it's like the old chap in King's *Hours*, that *Heard hot and cold at the same time*. But this place don't look like *knowin'*, mister. There ain't no time to lose."

At that portion of the continental road which the party were now descending, the mountains rose steeply on every side, and many volcanic peaks were visible at various points of the horizon. The highway was broad and well beaten, and sheltered upon the sun's rays by wooded hills, rising continually, between which could be caught, at intervals, a view of some little lake filling a hollow which perhaps was once a crater's bed, and worn upon the green mountain side like a silver bangle on a giant's arm. They were now more than ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, having, since leaving the city of Mexico on the day previous, ridden about the road itself and traveled nearly forty miles. Twenty of these, however, had been ridden since daybreak that morning, consequently it became important that they should quickly reach a place of rest and security, or abandon all hope of escape.

Meantime, they were still in the saddle, down the hills at a pace which was hazard as in the extreme. Vallejo's right hand held a rein of Terri's horse, while he guided his own with the left, and the Yankee performed the same office for the old Laddie. Fortunately, all the company were good riders, and their animals well trained to mountain travel, so that no mishap interrupted their adventurous course. Conversation, however, was impossible, for all attention became directed to the contemplation of their position, and nothing was heard but that heavy and—loudly, because the wind blew is such a manner as to cut the sharp edge of the horse's hoofs, and I mean the hoofs of all the animals of the road, and the hoofs of the horses of the saddle.

At length they reached the Río Frio, a small mountain stream, which was crossed. The cold temperature, and the sharp wind, however, did not let up, and it was the horses of the party which suffered most, when snows and ice covered the ground. Lakes and walls of porphyry reflected, and shone with the favorable lights all over this

region, and from bastions, as it were, through which the road winds in a narrow channel to which the streamlet has given the name of Cold River Pass. Here a small force might probably resist successfully the passage of an army, for the locality and natural defenses make the position a sort of Thermopylae; as it is the gateway of the loftiest ridge of all the Cordillera chain below the city of Mexico, and only a few miles beneath the point of prospect over all the surrounding country.

The route of the fugitives pointed toward Puebla, and till reaching that city, they had intended journeying by easy stages. Consequently, though traveling that day since the earliest light, they had, at the moment when alarmed by pursuers, accomplished less than forty miles from the capital, scarcely half the distance to the plain of Cholula, on which Puebla stands. But the fear of capture made a great difference in their rate of progress, and the last eight miles had been traversed in an exceeding brief space of time. Rio Frio was now at hand, where doubtless the mule-party, which had traveled by a shorter cut, would be found awaiting their approach.

But when Rio Frio was reached, no mule-party—no Padre Herrata or Hannibal were to be seen. Pomfret and Vallejo looked at each other in silence, fearing to give voice to the apprehensions which obtruded upon their minds. Tereca observed their uncertainty.

"They may have delayed—they may have rested."

"Rather doubtful," responded the Yankee. "Padre Herrata ain't the man to stop when he's got started; and the road they took was clean three miles shorter than our'n. I'm kind o' scared about the party—f'w?"

"Could they have been interrupted?" asked Vallejo.

"Well, to tell the real truth, I've been sort o' dubious for some time about findin' the padre at Rio Frio. You see, if the fellers ha' followed us, we'd had some signs o' chasin' afore now. 'Steal o' that, we hadn't seen a hooter of anybody behind us since we first set out on a run. Now my 'pinion is that they've hunted the padre instead of our party, and as the mules couldn't travel fast with their packs, they've jes' overhauled 'em, and capture'd the hull—"

"Hush! that's surely the sound of horses' feet," cried Terri, suddenly raising her finger to impose silence.

Her companions listened, and in a moment detected the noise of horses, very faint and apparently distant, but evidently advancing at a rapid pace along the lower road by which the mules should have arrived ere now.

"I hear 'em—I do so," cried Penfret. "And they ain't no male horses either. It's just as I expected. The 'tarnal yaller-skins have got the pack, and now they're in hot chase after us. Miss Terri—Sarah Vallejo—I guess we'll have to knock under, this time."

"No! Let us defend ourselves," exclaimed Alonzo.

"Can't be done—there're too many for us," returned the Yankee, drawing his pistols in their holsters as he spoke, and shifting the handle of a large knife which he wore in his belt, so as to bring it nearer his hand. There was a look of quiet determination on Penfret's countenance which gave a thrill to his companions, even while he declared the uselessness of defense.

"We've got to play Indian," remarked the North American, with a twinkle of his gray eye.

"What do you mean, Señor?"

"Why, just take to the woods, and trust to Providence," returned Penfret. "Don't say another word, one o' ye, but follow y' r Indian, and I will look out for chance."

Saying this, Penfret crossed the bridle of Lucille's horse, as he had done before, and without more ado beth the way, by taking on the banks of the stream, and plunged into the dark forest which skirted the mountains that here shelved steeply over the narrow valley. In a moment more, Rio Frio was deserted, but from the lower road could now be heard distinctly the measured and rapid sound of an approaching party of horse.

CHAPTER XII.
TERESA'S ESCAPE.

MEANWHILE, as divined by Pomfret, the mule-party had been overtaken and captured. Padre Herrata, after joining Hannibal and hastily giving him orders to await his mistress at the Rio Frio pass, was about to follow his friends immediately, when he was accosted by the mulatto, Lucille, who begged to accompany him to her mistress, leaving to Hannibal the care of the mules.

"*Ob, j' me m'abîme !*" cried Lucille, "what we shall do without one another? Each will be lost. Let me go, Padre Herrata."

"Truly, child, your place is with your mistress," answered the good priest; "but you ride a mule; it can not keep up with the horses,"

"*Oh, non dîs !* what will become of me?" cried the girl.

Padre Herrata glanced backward from the light which the mules had now reached, and beheld the pursuing party skirting the precipice beneath, at a pace which would soon bring them up the winding road. He decided immediately what course to take.

"Dismount," said he, quickly, to the mulatto, at the same time springing from his own horse. "We will exchange animals. Gallop forward and overtake your mistress: I will mount the mule and go on with Hannibal. We shall stop at the Rio Frio pass. Away, my girl!"

Lucille needed no second command. In an instant more the exchange was effected, and the mulatto dashed down the mountain in pursuit of her mistress, while Padre Herrata, besetting the mule, said quietly to Hannibal:

"It is doubtless for the best; now let us press forward quickly."

The negro, who cherished great respect for the padre, ranged the mules, five in number, with his two fellow-attendants bringing up the rear, and thus disposed, the party diverged suddenly from the main road, and clattered swiftly

down the more direct, but rough and difficult road that led to the Pueblo del Rio. Padre Herrata and Hannibal led the way, while the two attendants, riding on either side, and grasping the head of the heavily-laden pack-mule, followed as best as they could. Behind them, as they descended the steep path, the herd of horses suddenly stopped, and knew that the pursuing company had gained the crest of the hill, but just then, as I never doubt, a hasty order was given to the pack-mules, as we have before noticed, and all started up, and got over the lower plain.

Padre Herrata knew that, if pursued vigorously by the party of men, his own had little chance of escape; but he trusted to reach the Rio Pueblo before being overtaken, in which event he intended being able to delay immediate capture, and perhaps to rescue his friends entirely, by abandoning the mules to the two attendants and Hannibal, under conduct of Pomfret, and then to ride back upon the main road with Vallejo and the Mexicans, in order to parley with the enemy and thus give time to the fugitives to escape. He knew the Yankee to be well acquainted with all the country around Pueblo, and trusted in his own skill and discretion to protect his charge, while both Vallejo and Villalba, being Spaniards, could not be in danger of immediate capture and punishment, even if they pursued. It happened, as he feared, vindictive personal enemies.

Padre Herrata, in this calculation, had no thought of the probability of the horse and mule roads ravine road being taken by the Indians. Such, however, it became very soon evident was the case, for hardly had the mules advanced a mile when the clatter of horses was heard above, and Padre Herrata at once knew that the mules and not the horses would be first overtaken. At first, this conviction was gratifying to the priest, probably, as it did, a means of delaying their enemies, and thus affording the opportunity of escape to Tom and his crew. But he could immediately see that the pack-mules could not be overtaken and won. As one of the Indians, who was held up against the Rio Pueblo as the line of retreat, it was quite probable that his friends might then attack his master, which in most of course result in their capture. Padre Herrata was almost in despair, for he

saw no method of extrication from this new danger; but nevertheless, the priest was quick to resolve and prompt to execute, and he seized a forlorn hope.

"Hannibal?" he cried, "take the bridle of the pack-mule and push forward on the straight road, at your speed, till you reach your mistress. Then say to Señor Pomfret that we are taken, and he must escape as he can. Do you understand, Hannibal?"

"Yes, massa. I'm to 'scape 'long wi' Massa Pomfret, and you is to be cotched."

"Away, then, and do your best."

Hannibal seized the mule's bridle and urged his own forward at its utmost speed, while Padre Herrata, addressing the mestizos, bade them turn their mules and follow him. Hannibal, the negro, looked back once and beheld a cloud of dust as his late companions disappeared in a curve of the ascent, and then pushed forward as rapidly as possible. The road was rough and uneven, and the sharp points of the porphyritic rocks caused even the mules, sure-footed as they were, to hesitate in some portions of the rugged way. But Hannibal, intent on reaching his mistress, took note neither of danger nor difficulty, lashing his beast with a short leather thong which he carried, and using various inducements of voice and hand to accelerate the animal's motion.

"Gorra! you creep, you son of a jack, you!" ejaculated the negro. "Why for you no run like horse? 'Spes I gits off, 'fore long—go alone. Come up, ole m.i.s.—no time for go to sleep yeah."

By dint of such admonitions, Hannibal managed to infuse considerable energy into his long-eared steeds, and they ascended and descended the rocky paths with unabated celerity till the pass of Rio Frio, with its high walls of mountain on either side, was at last reached. But to Hannibal, unacquainted with the appointed place of meeting, the little stream that gushed by the road presented no inducements to pause. His mistress and her companions were nowhere to be seen, and the padre had directed him to push forward till he reached them. Consequently he stopped not at Rio Frio, save for a moment to breathe his mules, but plunged downward once more and entered in the narrow intricacies of the pass beneath.

Thus it happened that, when in a very brief space after Hannibal's passing the stream, the horses of his mistress and her party reached the same spot, no traces of the negro were visible. The road was too rocky to receive any indentation from the feet of man, so Pomfret and the others remained in ignorance of the true earnest servant having missed them; and therefore, only pressing to be sure they were still pursued, the fugitives, as we have seen, departed from the highway and plunged into the woody defiles on the right of the Rio Frio.

The sun was now declining, for the day had worn some two hours since the time when our travelers had contemplated to enjoy the grand panorama of the valley of Mexico, outspread beneath their gaze. On the unsheltered road, the heat and glare were still, it is true, almost unbearable; but when, diverging from the pass, our party reached the velvet carpet of a succession of shaded glades, and felt themselves borne over the grassy turf, without the sound of a hoof upon its spongy bed, and when, coolly from its mountain openings, a delicious breeze came to refresh both riders and steeds, the sudden transition seemed like enchantment, and the woodlands through which they advanced might have passed for the borders of fairy regions.

But the green shades and cool sheltered forest-openings soon gave place to difficult and dangerous paths, as the horses began to descend the mountain terrace on which they had entered from the highway, and became involved in the thick growth of underwood and clumps of cactus, interspersed with palms and dwarfed oaks. The ground began to be uneven and dangerous, sharp volcanic fragments protruding constantly, from beds of lava and layers of slate. It now became impossible to keep the saddle, and Valljo assisted Teresa to alight, while Pomfret, collecting the horses in single file, led them through tangled brambles and down the difficult slope, always endeavoring to direct them to the most practicable pathway.

They passed on for some hours, they penetrated the wilderness so far as to be quite unable to recognize either camp or plantation. The horses of Pauline, Hannibal, and Teresa, were in much uneasiness; but Teresa confided greatly in the vigilance and resolution of her countryman, Pomfret, whom Providence, it appeared, had sent to be a

protector in her hour of trial. Nor was the maiden insensible to the chivalric attentions of Alonzo Vallejo, whose whole anxiety seemed to be for her safety and comfort. The youth, indeed, was not one to remain unnoticed by a lady's eye. His form was graceful, yet sinewy, his manner courteous, and his noble features, naturally pale, were now flushed with exertion, and perhaps the happier of serving the fair American. Many a romantic young lady might have been glad to travel with such a cavalier as Vallejo; though none, perhaps, could have complained less than she did of the hardships encountered—of brambles, rough cactus, and sandy soil, tearing her garments and wounding her tender feet, albeit a manly arm lifted her lightly over the most difficult obstacles. Tere-a suffered, but smiled, as she kept on, glad to escape what she dreaded far worse, her unscrupulous Mexican pursuers.

At length the yellow sunbeams began to slant across the foliage, and, much to their joy, the rugged ground gave way to breaks of level sward and trees less tangled with undergrowth. It was evident that water was near, for the grass grew greener and the cactus clumps disappeared; and presently they gained an opening in the forest which ushered them abruptly on a luxuriant glade, so quiet and lovely, that their first glimpse of it made them forget the fatigues of the march.

It was an invitation to halt and repose. Pomfret, without speaking, proceeded to unbuckle the trappings, and remove the saddles from the horses, allowing the weary animals to crop the rich grass. Then turning to his companions, our Yankee addressed them in his quaint way:

"My friends, we've had consid'ble of an Ingen trail this afternoon, and it's my 'pinion we've got about as far as sun-down, anyhow."

"And what do you propose to do now, Mr. Pomfret?" asked Tere-a.

"Camp down, I reck'n, and git a good night's lodgin' before we tackle up again, miss—"

"Remain here?"

"Well, now, we might look a smart spell farther, and find things a sight wus, Miss Terey. This 'ere interval's cut out by natur' as a campin'-down spot; and I callato Squiro

Vallejo and myself can fix up a wigwam for you as good as Prince Peacock's ever had, now I tell you."

"I have every confidence in you, Mr. Pomfret," responded Teresa.

"There, now, thank you, miss; and see if we don't make a rale lady's chamber for you, bless your heart," replied Pomfret. "And first of all, before the sun goes down, I want to show you about where we are, friends. Jes' look up there!" The Yankee pointed, as he said this, through a gap in the overhanging branches of trees, and the eyes of Alonzo and Teresa followed his motion. They could discover nothing, however, but a succession of shelving precipices towering above.

"Jes' look sharp," cried Pomfret. "Cast your eyes up shuttin' lidder to that mountain-top, and see if you can't sight a white spot, lookin' like a tarnation cro'-nest. Well, now, I tell ye, that's the identical ridge we crossed, jes' 'fore them yaller-skins come on full chase arter us."

"Surely," exclaimed Vallejo, "we can not have descended from that altitude."

"Fact," replied Pomfret. "Notin' short o' two thousand feet, if it's a hair; and what's more, we've traveled a dozen miles, crossin' six o' you and I 'fore I 'cep' that 'ere cro'-nest. You see the great natural r'el winds down the m'untin' side about ten miles away from this, and goes a-skirtin' the foot-hills to Puebla."

"How far are we, then, from Puebla?" asked Alonzo.

"Hard on to thirty miles, nigh as I can guess," answered the Yankee; "but, there's a fiel o' mine and Padre Hererra's n'er arter than that, wh're we can put up a spell. But I reckon a bit o' som thin' won't hurt any on us about now," continued Pomfret, as he proceeded to the saddle-bags, and began to take from them'sveral articles provided by his Creek wife. "Her's some figs, and a box o' sardines, squire, and there's a drak o' rale super wine, no discount, now I tell ye. Miss Teresa, we've got some suar-tamarinds and pound-cake, that'll just do—any quantity; and there's a brook under you'r bush, singin' away like a tea-kettle. But, for sakes, Sister Vallejo, you and I mustn't forget the wigwam. Here, Lucille, you jus' fix up tea, and the squire and me'll 'tend to other chores. Come along, Sister."

Alonzo hastened to emulate the Yankee, in making himself useful, and the twain, penetrating the thick wood, soon collected a mass of green boughs and favorite foliage, with which they returned loaded to the camp. Meantime, Lucille assisted her mistress to prepare a tempting repast, which was spread upon the sweet grass, under the soft haze of twilight. The young men on their part, aided specially by Pomfret's jack-knife, began to build an arbor for Teresa between four symmetrie trees, which offered graceful support, while, crossing and interweaving the fragrant materials into an impervious roof, they joined it to the long undergrowth of vines, disposing the sides, like drapery, in festoons and looped tendrils. A quantity of variegated wild flowers, rich with perfume, peeped tastefully out from the enameled curtains, and beneath all was the velvet verdure, soft as a downy couch. Altogether, our artificers created a bower that astoni. led and delighted her for whose shelter it was intended.

After discussing the supper, securing the horses, and inspecting all surroundings, Pomfret reclined with Vallejo on the turf, enjoying their cigars, while Teresa returned with Lucille to her sylvan dormitory. The night was passed in alternate watches by the gentlemen; and when the first rays of the sun began to slope over the mountains, Pomfret was up, with horses ready for the road. Teresa came forth, rosy and beautiful, to tell of her calm repose, and Vallejo, like a true knight, hastened to arrange every thing for her traveling comfort. A draught of sparkling water from the running water near, brought in a goblet which emanated, like every other necessary, from Pomfret's saddle-bags, with some tamarind conserve and crisp white crackers, tempted Teresa's appetite; while her escort contented themselves each with a cup of wine before putting foot in saddle. Then they all rode away, in the mellow atmosphere of mornin', inhaling a thousand sweets from the wooded plain, then robed in all the freshness of spring. Pomfret talked of adventures connected with the neighboring hills, which were noted in Mexican story for many wild exploits of brigands and other outlaws; and as for Alonzo Vallejo, riding through cool glades, over mounds of green turf, from which the eye could catch glimpses of a broad river flowing between fields and hills, he, we may be sure,

he looked on Teresa, sighed to think such romantic journeying must ever be ended.

At length, emerging from mountain declivities, the party entered on a beaten road which Pomfret conjectured must conduct to the national highway from Mexico to Puebla de los Angeles. The path, however, was still narrow and sequestered, though signs of husbandry multiplied as they advanced. On the route, the previous afternoon, no vegetation, save that of nature's rank distribution, had met their observation, but now they were greeted with all varieties of cultivated products flourishing in this luxuriant portion of Mexico. Pomfret recognized on all sides the grains of northern climes; tender blades of wheat just starting from the generous soil, and blended with more rugged leaves of corn and barley; while here and there, as in his own New England home, were clumps of blossoming apple-trees, whose familiar perfumes were wafted to him like memories of childhood. Teresa, as she glanced at the Yankee, who was quite silent, fancied that she saw a tear moistening his eyes, and a pensive shadow softening his sharp features; but the next moment Pacham Pomfret uttered a loud "Alam!" and began to whistle vigorously the air of "Hail Columbia."

Exeling the white walls of a hacienda, embower'd in woods, that crowned an eminence on their left, attracted the gaze of Teresa and Alonso. It was evidently the abode of refinement, perhaps luxury, for the travelers, peering toward it through intervals of the well-trimmed trees, caught glimpses of statuary of white and the green, like wood-nymphs, while the falling drops of fountain tickled on the aromatic air that seemed to blow from gardens.

"A beautiful dwelling-place," cried Vallejo, in admiration, as the house came more fully into view, with its balconies commanding a terrace high over them, its jalousied casements overgrown with honeysuckles and clematis and rose, almost hiding the porch and open door.

"Lovely, indeed!" repeated Teresa, sighing, as she thought how she had often yearned for such a home to be shared with her brother, when fortune should have smiled upon him. And that brother—where?

"Well, squire," cried Pacham Pomfret, abruptly pulling

bridle, "we might as well put up and bait. I'm nation sure there's somethin' to eat here; and folks as good as they're handsome, now I tell ye."

Saying this, Pomfret turned from the road, through a grassy lane, which, winding at the base of the terrace, conducted upward to the mansion. On either side was a hedge of wood-bine, whose delicious aroma made the air honey. Extending beyond, were orchards thick with blossoms, and fields of new-springing grain. Around the cottage were a piazza and balcony, and every casement was covered with roses and flowers. Approaching the rosy portal, Pomfret dismounted and gave his hand to Teresa, while at the same moment two figures appeared, apparently the master and mistress of the hacienda.

"Don Lorenzo, I s'pose you don't forgit an old friend," was the salutation of Pomfret to the young and smiling gentleman, who advanced first.

"Señor Pomfret! welcome! a thousand welcomes!" was the hearty response, with extended hand. "How happy is this meeting! And your friends, Señor?"

"We shall be acquainted, Don, double-quick, now I tell you," cried Pomfret, proceeding to introduce his companions to the host, who, in turn, presented them to his wife, a charming creature, in the flush of mirthful beauty, who embraced Teresa warmly, kissing her lips with true womanly frankness.

"Don Lorenzo, if you and your wife, Señora Inez, ain't matched jes' like two roses on a stein, then there's no sich thing as harmony in music," cried Pomfret. "It warms up my heart to see you smiling so, I'm c'enmost like to cry. God bless both on ye!"

So saying, Putnam Pomfret took Vallejo's arm, and followed his hostess into the cottage, whither Teresa had already been conducted by its gentle mistress.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WOUNDED PADRE.

PADRE HERRATA, after enjoining Hannibal to make all haste in overtaking his mistress, rode back, the reader knows, in company with the Mestizos to meet his prisoner. Arrived within speaking distance, he drew rein at the abrupt command of their leader, and remained motionless, with severe countenance and placid demeanor. The Mestizo lackeys, checking their mules, remained behind.

Gabriel Falcone, foaming with rage, rode up to the priest, and leveled a pistol at his head.

"Traitorous friar! where are the others of your party?"

"All of my party you can see before you, Señor."

"'Tis a lie! Where is that foreign spy and his female accomplice, for whose arrest I bear the order of General Pareja? Answer without evasion, priest, or I'll blow out your plotting brains on the spot."

"Have you a warrant for that, also, my son?" asked Padre Herrata, not minding his epianimity.

"By the God! you will learn, if you refuse to answer my questions. Where are the Americans?"

"They have journeyed another road than this," answered the priest.

"Another road—beware!"

"I speak truth, my son. Those whom you seek have taken the upper road, leaving myself and the twain behind me to be harassed by your especial pursuit."

These words, uttered very quietly, inflamed Falcone's anger to the last point. "Villainous monk!" he shouted, rising fiercely in his saddle, and, pressing the trigger of the pistol with which he had nimbly seized to threaten the priest, he discharged it full at the latter's breast.

Padre Herrata raised his hand to his head, lifted his eyes a moment toward heaven, and then fell heavily from his mule upon the dust of the road.

As the pistol exploded the Mexican soldiers who formed

Falcone's troop uttered a cry of dismay, and hardly had the friar fallen before two or three of the rough fellows sprang from their saddles and knelt beside the prostrate body. Gabriel Falcone glared at them savagely, and rode toward the Mestizo servants, who shrunk in their seats under his menacing regards.

"Where are your masters, dogs? Speak, or you swing from the boughs above you."

The Mestizoes averted their eyes only to fix them on the neighboring trees, which offered such convenient substitutes for the gallows. Then, with one accord, both slid to the ground, groveling before the wrathful Mexican.

"*O, por amor de Dios!* Señor, we are innocent. We are poor devils of servants not worth a rope."

"Answer me, then—where are your master and mistress?"

"*Los Americanos?*" cried the nearest.

"El Señor Pomfret?" gasped the other wretch.

"Yes—what of him? And the Señora? Speak, you dogs, or I'll hang you at once."

"*O illustissimo!* The padre spoke truth. *Los Americanos* have taken the upper road. 'Tis a league back, *Licellaiza*, they turned off."

"Perdition!" roared Falcone, spurring his horse, and riding down the miserable Mestizoes. Then, wheeling round, he fronted the soldiers, several of whom had lifted Padre Herrata in their arms, and were stanching the wound in his breast.

"Is the traitor dead?" demanded the young man, with an oath. But, instead of a reply from the soldier, he heard a general murmur, which boded insubordination among the rest.

"Do you hear me, sirrah? Is the man dead?"

"The holy priest still breathes," answered the soldier. "It is not quite a murder."

Captain Falcone—for he now held that rank by commission from the new President—bit his lips, and gave the order to remount.

"What shall we do with the wounded padre?" asked another soldier.

"To the devil with—ha! will ye mount, or are ye, too traitors and rebels?"

"We are neither, Captain," responded the man. "But all the world knows Padre Herrata is a friend to Mexico, and to her soldiers. He has shared bread with the soldiers, and a curse would rest on us did we leave him to die in the highway."

These words were spoken with a dogged earnestness which convinced Falcone that it would be unsafe to irritate his refractory followers. Intimidation of such men, accustomed to loose discipline, was out of the question; so, stoking his rage, he yielded to necessity, and gave permission to the soldiers, assisted by the Mestizoes, to construct a litter, whereon to transport the wounded and insensible priest.

And thus, instead of capturing the fair Teresa, and revenging himself on her protectors, Captain Gabriel Falcone now found himself constrained to retrace his steps to the capital. Cursing his evil temper, which had led him to commit the rash act of shooting a priest, and one, moreover, as he soon learned from the conversation of his gloomy soldiers, who was known and beloved among the people, the new chief took his descending way to the gates of Mexico, where he arrived at the edge of evening. The two Mestizoes were speedily conveyed to the guard-house, and Padre Herrata, reported as a wounded prisoner, to the hospital; after which Falcone divested himself of his road-stained military trappings, and set out to seek his friend Don Ricardo Ramos, just at the hour when Putnam Poinfret and Alonzo Vallejo were busy in the construction of that romantic bower in which, as we have already seen, the beautiful Teresa passed her quiet wildwood night.

CHAPTER XIV.

FALCONE'S FORAY.

AN atmosphere of happiness reigned in and around the hacienda of Lorenzo and Inez, the gentle entertainers of Pomfret and his two companions. Lorenzo, possessed of ample means, and warmly seconded in his tastes by the devotion of his lovely wife, had surrounded their beautiful home with all that could contribute to the gratification of true artistic taste, or enhance the pure pleasures of domestic life. The mansion itself, embowered in fragrant woodlands, and redolent with the perfume and grace of the flowers which encompassed its every border, was a fit dwelling-place for hearts inspired with mutual love, and charming as the seat of freely-dispensed charity and enlarged hospitality. The master and mistress of that hacienda, though mingling little in the world beyond their threshold, were yet known and esteemed by high and low through all the cultivated neighborhood, which stretched from the main road nearest to their gates, downward through the luxuriant "Valley of Murillo," named after the father of Lorenzo's bride, a rich proprietor, and around the base of the lofty "Outlaw's Mount," once the retreat of a band of brigands, lately dispersed by the death of their famous leader.

Weeks fled swiftly over the heads of the three guests, and yet no tidings of the Padre Herrata, or of the missing Hannibal and the Mestizo could be gathered, though messengers had been dispatched at various times from the hacienda to the neighboring villages, and even as far off as Puebla, some miles across the plain, from the other extremity of the valley of Murillo. Pomfret grew impatient, apprehending that danger had befallen his friend the padre, and well knowing that the priest's enemies, as well as his own, were not few among the supporters of the new government. Once or twice, when no news came, he thought of leaving the hacienda, which would afford a secure retreat for his young countrywoman, and retracing his course to the capital; but a little reflection satisfied the Yankee of the futility of any aid of his, should

the priest be really in the hands of powerful foes, while his own discovery might involve both himself and friends in greater peril. He resolved, therefore, to accept for a period longer the hospitality of his Mexican friends, in order to see what turn the political affairs of Mexico might take, before exposing himself to all the risks which, in the present excited state of popular feeling, an alien might encounter, even though provided with a passport of the late President, Herrera.

Meanwhile, Don Ricardo Ramos and his friend Falcone, in spite of the young Captain's unremitting efforts to discover the whereabouts of his enemy, Pomfret, and the maiden in whom he was no less interested, remained in entire ignorance of the fate of either. That they were concealed not many leagues from the capital appeared strongly probable, though the country had been scourged by spies as well as traversed by the two conspirators in every direction.

Thus passed the months, till the return of Santa Anna, the fall of Paredes and the capitulation of Monterey, followed one another in agitating the public mind. But, hardly had the latter event been chronicled by report, than intelligence more nearly affecting his desires, was communicated to Falcone. Don Ricardo roused him one morning with the information that he had at length obtained certain traces of the fugitive Teresa.

"My dear Falcone, we have the lovely American maiden almost in our clasp."

"English yourself, Don Ricardo. Tell me where she is."

"Ah, you come to your senses. Well, our fair one is at a romantic hacienda, some miles this side of Puebla, where, surely enough, she managed to baffle all our search."

"And how did you find this out?"

"By the most accident. A silver-trader from Chihuahua, who has dealings with Señor Pomfret, and who is a talkative fellow, made a confidante with me last night at the gaming-table. From him I learned that the Yankee had visited Puebla, in company with the proprietor of a hacienda of the neighboring valley. This was hint enough to me, and following up the hint, I had the satisfaction to inform you that Teresa is at a great pleasure, for a sudden visit, though quite secure, in the hacienda, from all molestation."

"And this Yankee and the youth Vallejo?"

"Are with her, it seems. But you do not fear me, surely?"

"Fear!" echoed Falcone. "Not I, Don Ricardo. But this good news is overpowering. What shall we do?"

"A half-dozen stout fellows at our backs will remove whatever objections the Señora might interpose to our company—eh, Gabriel? Here you shall wed, and I will take care of her dowry. All we shall want is a priest when the Señora arrives."

"Priests are not hard to find in Mexico."

"Can we not secure our friend, the padre, whom you so nearly murdered with that unlucky shot? He is in prison still, I believe."

"He is, and recovered from his wound. These friars are tough. But this Padre Herrata is an impenetrable fellow."

"Pish! With friars one can do any thing. He has influence with your Señora, and can smooth the matter for you as no other priest could."

"That is true. I leave all in your hands."

It was at the earliest dawn of day, not long after this conversation, that the two schemers, Don Ricardo and Falcone, in company with six other horsemen, rode leisurely along the national road to a declivity which conducted to the entrance of Murillo's valley, near which was situated the hacienda of Lorenzo and Inez—that happy retreat in which Teresa had found a refuge.

The six men, who, at a word from their leader, threw themselves from the saddle, and proceeded, without confusion, to tether their steeds in such manner as to permit the animals to crop the herbage, while at the same time they should be securely confined within the thicket, were such characters as one seldom meets in quiet times or peaceful lands, but who in Mexico are too common at all seasons. Swarthy from the sun in which they bask, and with reckless passions imprinted on their lineaments, these fellows could be easily recognized as members of that lepero class which curses Spanish America as the lazzaroni does Italy. Cunning and devoid of conscience, cringing but desperate, these miserable people present a true type of degraded manhood, with its loftier impulses

forgotten, and its superior intelligence brutalized. Incapable of genuine religion or sincere patriotism, these wretches are superstitiously servile to priestcraft, and the ready instruments of political demagogues. Such is the half bandit, half imbecile **lepero of Mexico.**

The **Sefiora Teresa**, in the seclusion of her new home, assisted by the society of her kind hostess and the poetic devotion of **Alonso Vallejo**, revived in a great measure from the depression into which her bereavement had thrown her. The consolations of affection are mighty; and as Teresa grew daily more sensible of Vallejo's noble qualities, she learned to esteem him more, and to feel his presence dearer, as the recollection of her lost brother became softened. Naturally, then, the maiden began once more to look forward to that radiant future which young hearts are ever disposed to weave out of the beautiful mists of their morning, which they can not believe will ever distill to tears.

Hopes and dreamings, blending sorrow with happiness, occupied Teresa's mind one lovely morning, when, leaving her friend **Inez** engrossed in household duties, she ventured out of the garden walls attached to the hacienda, and wandered into the woodland beyond, a favorite resort of the dreamy Alonso, who, stretched beneath some branching tree, was probably indulging at this hour in reveries connected with her future and his own. She passed from the cultivated grounds, after plucking a bunch of fresh blossoms, and had strayed for some time amid the solemn stillness of the wood, in utter desolation, when her steps were suddenly arrested by a rustle in the neighboring thicket, and, ere her lips could utter a word of alarm, she found herself enveloped in a cloak, and borne swiftly through the forest intricacies. Vainly she struggled and sought to articulate a cry. It was the arm of **Giovanni Falcone** which gathered her muffled form to his breast, while his hidden hand pressed the mantle over her mouth. Don **Italo** prepared the younger villain, parting the interlacing undergrowth to afford a passage, and, at intervals, bidding him without uttering a word, in managing Falcone's ruffian hand. Thus the abductors hurried to a sheltered glade, where the horses awaited them in readiness to mount and gallop away.

But the prize was not yet secured. For as the two men reached the forest-edge, and gave a signal to their myrmidons to emerge from the covert, Teresa spasmodically forced the covering from her lips, and, uttering a shriek, half smothered but still piercing in its despair, sunk, with the exertion, insensible in her kidnapper's arms. Don Ricardo vented an oath, as he rode toward the thicket, whither Falcone followed with the motionless weight he sustained. But at this moment the latter saw his path disputed by the sudden apparition of a man, whose hand grasped a lifted club. It was Alonzo Vallejo, who, doubting whether he heard Teresa's voice, had reached the spot to behold her situation. At once seizing the only weapon in his reach, a fragment of wood lying near, he precipitated himself upon the abductor, whom he recognized as his former antagonist, Falcone.

Had the gamester been a giant, he could hardly have withstood an onset like that of Vallejo, inspired for the moment with Herculean vigor. But Falcone, starting back, interposed the form of Teresa beneath the impending blow, which became fixed at once, as if paralyzed. Don Ricardo, at the same instant, discovering his comrade's danger, turned with sword in hand, and at the same time the leperos emerged from their concealment. But the undaunted Vallejo recked not odds in defense of his Teresa. Springing aside to avoid Ricardo, he dealt the foremost lepero so sturdy a blow with his club, that he now fell prone to the earth. Then, relinquishing the unwieldy weapon, he rushed upon the fallen bravo, and with a single movement disarmed himself of the sword from his hand and a pistol from his belt. Thus, suddenly armed before his surprised assailants, the brave youth fired at Don Ricardo, who fell back just in time to escape the bullet, which, grazing his cheek, buried it in the head of a lepero behind him.

Such an unlooked-for reverse as the fall of two of their comrades in as many minutes, struck the bandits with alarm, with panic; and, foretelling that only one man could stand, they turned to fly. But Don Ricardo's voice called them back. "Cowards!" he cried, "do you run from a scullion like this?" And, with a fierce imprecation, he rushed upon Vallejo, who prepared to defend himself.

But it seemed now that the gallant young man was destined

to end his devotion with the sacrifice of his life; for, though Falcone took no part in the conflict, there were yet five armed men opposed to one. Nevertheless, he withstood Don Ricardo's practiced assault without faltering, only taking the precaution to place his back against a tree.

"Leave the youth to me, Gabriel. Out with the horses and I am," cried Don Ricardo, hoarsely. "I will settle this little affair."

Obediently to this command, the leperos led the horses forward, while Remos continued to press Vallejo, who, unaided in strength, felt himself momentarily sinking. Meanwhile, two of the leperos had lifted their prostrate comrades, one of whom was dead, while one of the remaining myrmidons hastened with Teresa on one of the horses.

"Have none of you a pistol-shot to avenge your fellows?" cried Falcone, as he sprung to his saddle, and grasped the bridle of the horse on which the maiden was secured. In answer to this appeal, a lepero leveled his pistol and fired at Remos, who, at the same moment, received Don Ricardo's blade in his sword-arm. But at this crisis, a new arrived checked the aspect of affairs. A rush was heard suddenly in the forest, and the tall figure of Platinum Pomfret darted into view, with the celerity of a panther.

"Look in there, yellow-skins!" shouted the North American, as his quick eye divined with a glance the position of all parties. Then dashing at Falcone, who sat on horseback bent to the ground wherein two leperos were holding Teresa, he grasped the master's shoulders, and tore him with a violent effort to the ground. "Lie thar', ye pizen serpent!" he cried, at the same time clashing in his powerful hand a heavy mace, with which he dealt a sweeping blow upon the leperos.

"Hah! He aforesaid Falcone, rolling in the dust ere he could rise from him. The older man turned from him, and fled along the foot of the tree; but ere he had got half way, the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and Remos, followed by several servants of the bandit, appeared advancing. The leperos rushed to their leader, calling Pomfret at liberty to turn his attention to Teresa, while the two principal villains, discovering all to be lost, quickly took to the flight of their satellites.

CHAPTER XV.

PADRE HERRATA'S FRIEND.

"TEN thousand curses on my ill luck!" cried Gabriel Falcone, as he sat with his associate, Don Ricardo, in the latter's house, about a week after their unsuccessful attempt to **abduct** Teresa Clinton.

"Ten thousand curses will not help the matter," responded the elder conspirator, in his cynical manner.

"What in the fiend's name is to be done, man?"

"Have patience, my good Gabriel. Meantime, go you to the Padre Herrata, and promise him whatever you please, on condition that he assists you to marry the Señora. I doubt not that, with a little priestly aid, you can soon lure the fair one to trust herself in other hands than those of her *Chil*, Vallejo."

"I fear this padre. He has little cause to bear good-will to me."

"Padres and women have their prices at all times. This friar's assistance is necessary. Let it be paid for, and we shall secure it."

"I will make the attempt, Don Ricardo, and report to you the result."

So saying, Falcone went home to his quarters in the castle of Chapultepec, whose strong towers defended the approaches to the capital. Here were the military schools and headquarters of the National Guards, and here resorted many of the best officers of the army reserve. Through favor of Paredes, Falcone was in command of a company of veterans worthy of a better Captain, and to his charge had been committed a bastion, wherein were confined several State prisoners—among others the Padre Herrata.

Falcone found the priest at his devotions, kneeling upon a small window, through which could be seen a fine panorama of the valley of Mexico. Down the slope of Chapultepec to the city walls, and to the more remote lake of Tezeuco, a line of defenses extended, interspersed with gardens and groves,

once the glory of this vale, which was also, in ancient times, the seat of those magnificent halls wherein the Montezumas collected their almost fabulous treasures of nature and art.

"Land of beauty and plenty," murmured the priest, as, unconscious of being overheard, he continued his prayer, "may the sins of thy unnatural children be visited not on thee! May war and violence be stayed, and—"

"A very good prayer, padre, but slightly out of season. War is here and violence not far off, I imagine."

The priest slowly rose, turning his calm eyes upon the intruder, whose voice he recognized. Padre Herrata's face was pale, and his form much thinner than before his imprisonment; for, though recovered from the wound inflicted by Falcone, he yet suffered from loss of blood and reduced strength.

"Prayer is never out of season, young man, and violence ever is," replied the priest, quietly.

"Reverend father, forget the past, and aid me with your good offices in disposing that dear girl whom I so fervently love to regard me with the affection I feel for her. Thus you will be the instrument of uniting two hearts, and of making me supremely happy."

The padre did not immediately reply. He seemed to be absorbed in thought, and his gaze wandered abstractedly through the bare window. At length, however, he spoke:

"I think, my son," he said, in a measured tone, "you remarked that by assisting you, I shall benefit myself. How may that be?"

"Ah!" said Falcone, to himself, "the pious fox must know his reward beforehand." Then he continued, aloud: "All that I can promise shall be yours. I will at once take measures for your release from this place, and if my purse and influence can advance you in—"

"Enough!" cried the priest, suddenly elevating his voice, and fixing his glance sternly upon the young man. "Gabriel Falcone! do you call me a! unprincipled adventurer! do I not know that through you the unhappy brother of this maid was led to his destruction? Do I not know that the pure and fairies you as the serpent whose trail has poisoned her happy youth?" Enough, Gabriel Falcone! Get thee from me!"

As Padre Herrata uttered these words, he turned away, raising his left hand with a gesture of repugnance, and expressing in his features all the horror which the retrospection of Falcone's acts was calculated to inspire. The bold young man quailed for a moment before the significant action, but he recovered himself immediately, and with features distorted by rage, advanced upon the priest.

"Cursed monk!" he hissed, savagely, "it is you, then, who have influenced her. But I will have a reckoning from you. The next time my shot will not miss!"

Saying this, Gabriel Falcone shook his clenched hand at the calm face of the padre, and, with a fierce oath, turned toward the door of the cell, which he opened with a violent wrench. But an object here met his eyes which somewhat confounded him.

Standing majestically in the opening, apparently about entering, was a tall figure, clad in the uniform of a field officer. The stranger stooped his lofty head beneath the stone arch, and passing Falcone without a word, advanced quickly toward the priest, whose figure was distinctly visible in the light of the window.

"Padre Herrata!"

"Anselmo, my noble son! Art thou returned indeed?"

"Truly, my father. 'Tis but a brief space since ~~driving~~ here I learned of your incarceration. But that is ended."

He embraced the priest affectionately in saying this.

"I shall be glad to know what all this means," here interrupted Captain Falcone, who, regaining his assurance, confronted the stranger. "As I have the honor to command in this quarter of the hill, I demand, sir, by what right—"

"Ah, sir, you shall know my right to be here," returned Colonel Montagnone, with chilling politeness. "You will, perhaps, respect the signature of your commander. Here, then, is authority for my prisoner, and for the release of my friend, Padre Herrata."

The speaker drew a paper from his bosom, and extended it to the other, who cast his eyes over it. It was an order, signed by General Bravo, directing the instant release of the priest, and commanding Captain Falcone to report himself instantly at head-quarters. The young officer turned pale

and regarding Montagnone with a savage look, turned on his heel and left the cell without a word, but not to report himself to his commander. Fearful of consequences he knew not what, and fearing him as if humiliated as well as thwarted by the new adversary he had found, the gambler mounted his horse, and galloped at once from the hill of Chapultepec.

And Gabriel Falcone, much to his chagrin, during the same morning, found himself abruptly ordered to report himself for active service at once, with a marching division of the army. So Gabriel Falcone was once more thwarted.

CHAPTER XVI.

DON RICARDO'S PLOT.

BUT, though the younger conspirator found himself obliged to abandon for a space his darling object, that arch schemer, Don Ricardo Ramos, desisted not in his plans for the ensnarement of Teresa Clinton, till at length he succeeded, through his emissaries, in discovering the whereabouts of Colonel Montagnone, and by this means, speedily regained trace of those under the latter's protection. He ascertained, moreover, that it was the consternation of Montagnone's influence with the Commander-in-Chief, Santa Anna, which had occasioned Valdijo and Teresa, together with their friendly entertainers in Marillo's valley, to remove from the latter's hacienda, then ominously threatened by the American invaders. During the rapid series of events that had marked the operations of General Santa Anna, from the breaking up of the camp at San Luis, and travel through Mexico, had been extremely perilous, and an outrage on the part of foreigners like Teresa Clinton and General Palmer to pass through a country swarming with predatory bands, could have resulted only in mischances. Consequently, the strangers had sojourned in Marillo's valley till the capture of Vera Cruz, by the forces of General Scott, and had a speedy assault of the inland, when the timely protection of General Montagnone secured for his friends a

safer retreat near the strongly fortified approaches to the capital itself. Señor Lorenzo and his wife availed themselves of the hospitality of a wealthy friend, Donna Isabella Núñez, who possessed a mansion near the lake Tezcuco, and Teresa Clinton accompanied them, under Montagnone's protection, to this new and securer abiding-place. Meantime, Alonzo Vallejo and Putnam Pomfret constituted themselves, with Lorenzo, the guardian knights of these distressed ladies.

Lucille, the creole attendant of Teresa Clinton, was, like most of her volatile race and vocation, at once a warm-hearted and attached servant, and an incorrigible coquette. While Hannibal was her fellow-domestic, she had well-nigh broken that poor fellow's heart with her vagaries, though it must be confessed her own had not been unmoved by the poor black's unlucky disappearance; nevertheless, as the little creole had been in past days, so she remained, until not a few full-blooded Mexicans, as well as many hapless Mestizos, felt their pulses beat faster as Lucille's white teeth glistened, or her silvery laugh tinkled in their ears. Indeed, the hand-maid's besetting foible was coquettish vanity, encouraged, perhaps, by the indulgence of her gentle mistress, and the general favor in which she found herself among their hospitable entertainers. Such was Lucille—as the artful Don Ricardo Ramos had judged her to be—and therefore she was no proof against his cunning when he adroitly approached her, one morning, in the disguise of a priest, pretending to be an acquaintance of Padre Herrata, the friend of her mistress.

Lucille was, of course, glad to speak with a friend of Padre Herrata, who had gone with the army, so she said, and which Don Ricardo well knew. She was also glad to tell how beloved her mistress was, and how Señor Vallejo was a noble and handsome young gentleman, and how Señor Putnam Pomfret, the Yankee, was a grand hero, who would protect them all from the American army and every body else. On his part, the shrewd Don Ricardo talked not only of Padre Herrata's many virtues, but of Lucille's good looks and amiable manners; so that the foolish damsel was speedily carried away by his discourse. Besides, he talked her own native French, and listened to her glib tongue, replying to his questions, with an attention quite flattering to the silly one.

Another interview followed the first, during which the subtle Rames pretended to disclose, as a great secret, that he was an old friend of the Señora Teresa's deceased mother, and well acquainted with the orphan's family history; that, moreover, the young lady was entitled to considerable property once owned by her mother in Mexico; and that, finally, he much desired to see the orphan American in possession of all her rights. The story was so artfully woven as to deceive the credulous mulatto completely. Deluded by the pretended priest's familiarity, and carried away by her anxiety to insure some great advantage to her mistress, she readily promised to do what Don Ricardo desired, and procure an interview for him with the Señora Teresa.

The looked-for opportunity occurred soon. Señor Lorenzo, one day, accompanied his lady and Donna Isabella, their hostess, on a drive to the city; Putnam Pomfret was absent, at the same time, on matters connected with the hacienda, and Teresa remained at home, attended by Lucille—though the devoted Alonso Vallejo was, as usual, in the vicinity of the hacienda. The maiden was occupied in her chamber, and the youth wandered near the lake borders, according to his habit, perusing over some favorite author, among the rustling shadows of the grove. The long day was nearly over, and the sun disappeared behind the lofty mountains, when Lucille stole out to meet Don Ricardo, who had made himself aware, with great satisfaction, of the unprotected situation of the hacienda. The waiting-maid conducted her crafty deceiver to the cool drawing-room, with its jalousied casements overlooking the garden sweets, and half-closed with mazes of jessamine and honeysuckle. There, leaving him, she proceeded to her mistress, with the information, that a strange clercymen desired to see her.

"To see me, Lucille?" exclaimed Teresa. "Where is Señor Vallejo?"

"He is walking, with his book, by the lake side," answered the mulatto, demurely, her heart palpitating uneasily with the consciousness of acting a part.

"But, I can't see a stranger, Lucille."

"Oh, mam'selle, he asks so earnestly! And, O ciel! I didn't remember! He did know mam'selle's dear mother, long ago."

As the word "mother" fell upon the orphan's ear, a deep flush, followed by sudden paleness, attested its effect upon her.

"Come, Lucille, we will go down at once. No, child; do you go at once and bring the Señor Vallejo. I will speak to the holy father, presently. Say this to him, and then seek Vallejo."

Lucille hurried to inform Don Ricardo that her mistress would presently see him; but she did not hasten, as Teresa had directed, to call the Señor Vallejo. Unhappy Lucille. She did not suspect that the wicked Don Ricardo was triumphing over her simplicity; that his satellites were already concealed in the woods skirting the roadside. Had the poor mulatto harbored a thought of danger, she would speedily have summoned a defender for her mistress.

But what sound was that which startled her suddenly? A suppressed shriek and the noise of rushing feet. Lucille stopped, listened intently, then darted toward the road which wound near the hacienda. Alas! the sight that met her eyes. Don Ricardo had cast away his priestly disguise, and was bearing Teresa in his arms, across the garden-walk, to a close carriage which stood at the very gate, its door attended by two swarthy servants. The Señora's head and face were wrapped about with a thick shawl, and she appeared to be quite insensible, when lifted and thrust into the vehicle. Lucille witnessed all this, and a loud, shrill scream from her pallid lips apprised the kidnapper that she did so.

"Curse that wench! She will ruin us," cried Don Ricardo, leaping into the carriage with the muffled Teresa. "Pedro, secure the mulatto; she must go with us."

In another moment Lucille's shrieks were stilled by a process similar to that which had rendered her mistress helpless. One ruffianly servant grasped her in his arms, while the other fastened a shawl around her mouth. She was then lifted into the coach, beside the fellow called Pedro, and opposite to his master and Teresa. The other servant sprung to the box, and the vehicle rolled rapidly away, into the dusky woods through which the highway conducted.

But, swift as the wheels whirled, and the carriage was borne forward, there was a swifter pursuit suddenly commenced by a man who, from the brow of a hill at nearly a

quarter of a mile distance, had caught a hurried glimpse of the confusion, and heard the shriek of Lucille, as she was seized by Pedro. Putnam Pomfret, returning from his errand abroad, had reached a point of view commanding the cottage door, just in time to overlook the last incident of the abduction—that of muffling and searing the mulatto. Pomfret's first impulse was to shout for help and plunge downward through an intervening grove, upon the sharers; but a moment's reflection satisfied him that he would not reach them in time for service, even if there were no armed men against him. Changing, therefore, his resolution at once, the brave Yankee darted from the road-side, and entering the forest, bounded like a deer through its shadows, following the line of the carriage-wheels, and directing his course to a point at which he should be able to intercept the fugitives by pursuing a shorter line than the circuitous highway. With panting chest, and ear strained to catch the sound of wheels, Pomfret thus kept on, for near a mile, when he at last found hims if neck an' neck with the horses which the driver was urging to their utmost speed.

"Lay on your string, Ingen," muttered Putnam Pomfret, sputteringly, as his long legs traversed the ground with unabated speed. "I'm on your track now, you con-armed kidnappers, and by thumbl'r, I'm a-goin' to keep it, now I tell ye."

With these words, the Yankee stretched his limbs for another burst, and, probably by the increasing gloom of the road, he arrived, not only to reach the flying carriage, but to ease his mind, much at his ease, upon the heavy broad-backed bench. Thus perched, with his legs drawn up to his chin, Putnam Pomfret felt the coach quiver as it was impelled along, and laugh'd quietly to himself, as the dusk grew into a dense fog, and the driver cracked his whip in the darkness.

"Put her through, Ingen," muttered Pomfret. "Give 'em the string. I'll bet ye a fourpence I get to town as soon as you do."

CHAPTER XVII.

TERESA IN DANGER.

WHEN Teresa Glinton regained consciousness, she found herself lying upon a couch in a strange apartment—Lucille, kneeling beside her, was chasing her hands and bathing her forehead with restoratives. Teresa sat upright and looked wildly around her.

“Lucille! Where are we?”

The mulatto placed her finger on her lips and glanced at the door.

Teresa raised her hand to her bosom.

“Where is it?—the dagger?” she asked.

“It is here, mademoiselle,” answered Lucille, pointing significantly to the pearl-hilt of a small stiletto hidden within the folds of a kerchief that crossed her breast. “I will give it to you, mademoiselle—when we are alone.”

Hardly had the mulatto pronounced these words, when a knock was heard at the door, and it was slowly unclosed, admitting the head of a man.

“May I enter?” said a softly modulated voice, and Teresa felt her heart suddenly stilled and her blood cease to flow; for upon the threshold of the apartment stood—Gabriel Falcone. The young man’s face was pale, and his right arm rested in a sling. She felt herself in that man’s power, without a hope of escape, and read the triumphant expression of his glance as it met her own. She knew that the unprincipled gamester remembered her scorn, and that he was likewise determined to avenge himself. Nevertheless, as one white hand rested on the handle of the weapon which lay hid beneath her bodice, Teresa felt that at least in one thing she was more than a match for her enemy—she feared not death.

“Señora Teresa, I come to ask pardon for all my offenses,” said Falcone, with an inclination of his head. “Am I to be forgiven?”

“Forgiveness is for the repentant to expect,” she replied.

“And I am truly repentant.”

For an instant, as Falcone uttered these words with depressed head, a gleam of hope visited Teresa's heart; but it faded as she caught the raised eyes of the speaker fixed upon her once more, with an unmistakable expression of exultant villainy. She shuddered as those bold orbs fell upon her, and the blood rushed tumultuously to her neck and forehead.

"Do you hate me?"

"Falcone—why do you persecute me?"

"Is love, then, persecution?"

"Such love as yours is worse than hatred or persecution," exclaimed Teresa, "for it would degrade its object forever."

"Indeed?" cried Falcone, with a short laugh. "But you mistake me, perhaps. I would not degrade—I would marry you!"

"And is not marriage with one whom I must despise a degradation?" cried the undaunted girl. "Falcone! it is useless for me to attempt concealment of my feelings, for you well know that now, more than ever, I must view you with contempt."

"Suzza—beware!" cried the young man, his countenance growing dark with passion. "Pause ere you decide your course; for by all the fiends, you shall be mine!"

With this threat, spoken in a measured tone that evinced the real wickedness of his heart, Gabriel Falcone turned away, and without another look at Teresa or Lucille, strode from the apartment.

The poor mulatto girl, who had always felt an unaccountable terror of the gambler Falcone, now wrung her hands and passionately deplored their situation, entreating again and again pardon for the part which she had taken in the betrayal of her mistress. But Teresa, retiring to her chamber, sunk upon her knees and poured forth fervent prayers to Heaven for succor in her extremity.

"Oh, what is to be done? wretch—bad creature that I am—! it is I who am to blame!" moaned poor Lucille, walking up and down the room as she gave vent to her thoughts, the tears, meanwhile, streaming from her eyes.

The girl paused opposite the window and gazed eagerly through the wires that barred it. Some object without appar-

ently attracted her attention and checked the exuberance of her affliction. And, indeed, Lucille had cause both for wonder and attention; for, as she peered between the bars of thick wire, she beheld a sight that was well fitted to astonish her. The window overlooked a square court-yard, shut in by stone walls. The apartments in which Teresa was confined were situated in the third story of the building, and high above its casements rose the dull sides of the parallelogram described by the inner walls of the ancient building. As Lucille looked upward she could just distinguish the figure of a man cautiously appearing upon the very edge of the lofty opposite wall, and beckoning to her with his hand. Lucille could not see the face of this man, but a sudden feeling of joy thrilled her heart, as though he were in some manner to be connected with the deliverance of herself and mistress. She stopped not to reason with her hopes, but pressing forward against the wires, returned the motions of the figure above by waving her handkerchiefs. Immediately the man disappeared, and Lucille, agitated more than ever, rushed to the chamber of her mistress, and informed her of what she had witnessed. Teresa shook her head sadly.

"I fear you have seen only some idle workman on the neighboring walls."

"But, mam'selle,—if he be *un courrier*—surely he will inform everybody—but *bon dieu*—and we shall be rescued—free once more."

"Poor child; you forget we are in Mexico, where lawless acts are common. But let us trust in Heaven for all, Lucille!"

As Teresa said this, a noise at the window startled them, and turning quickly, they beheld the face of a man at the bars. Lucille would have screamed aloud, but her voice failing her, she sunk trembling upon a couch. Teresa, however, advanced at once to the casement. The man outside occupied a strange and perilous position. Clinging with one hand to the wires while the other grasped a rope, by the aid of which he had just descended from the roof, the bold climber lowered his head, and whispered:

"Keep up your courage, miss; Putnam Pomfret's around!"

Teresa's heart leaped as she recognized the well-known accents of her countryman, whose face covered with dust and

perspiration, she had not at first recognized. But, ere she could utter a word, Pemfret's finger was pressed to his lips, and the next instant he released his hold of the wires and descended, scaling the rope with the agility of a cat. But, as he left the window, the maiden fancied she heard him whisper:

"To-morrow!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

TERESA A CAPTIVE..

ALONZO VALLJO, wandering with his book by the margin of the placid lake, mused tenderly upon her whom he loved so well, and little dreamed of the strange drama that was involving Teresa Clinton. Too soon, however, for his peace, did the youth, grown weary of solitude, turn his steps toward the hacienda. Bending his steps to the jalousied entrance, and crossing the great threshold, he called out "Teresa!" but no voice called out "Alonzo!"—no light foot-step answered his call. Teresa Clinton was no longer there. She had gone—vanished. No trace remained of her flight. The few domestics of the cottage were summoned, but could give no intelligence of Teresa. No one had heard the shriek, or the voice of Lucille. And Lucille, too, was gone! What terrible mystery was here!

All night, with frenzied eagerness, Valljo pursued the search. He explored the woods for miles around. He peered shallingly, by torchlight, into the waters of the lake. He mounted his horse, and galloped wildly over the neighboring roads. But no vestige, either of Teresa or her attendant, could be discovered.

At noon next day, after Lorenzo and the ladies had returned, Pemfret also presented himself, dusty and unshaven. Alonzo flew to meet him, and peer out his sad eyes; while the Yankee listened quietly. Then, taking Valljo's hands within his own, and gazing kindly into his face, he said:

"Young fellow! what 'ull ye give to know whar Miss

Teresy is? Keep a stiff upper lip, and all 'll come right; or my name ain't Putnam Pomfret."

Meantime, Teresa Clinton, in the silent apartments of Don Ricardo's mansion, trembled through the anxious hours at every noise that reached her ears. Enjoining upon Lucille to remain beside her and witness her death should she be able by no other means to avert the violence which she felt threatened her the maiden still clung with hope to the recollection of that one word which she had heard uttered by her countryman **at the window**:

"To-morrow!"

To-morrow had come, its weary minutes had been counted, its last sunbeams were now trembling on the wires that barred the casements. Still no shadow of a human form appeared upon the dull surface of the dead wall opposite, upon which her gaze, like that of Lucille, was ever steadfastly directed. Suddenly a noise was heard at the door, and a low knock.

"It is not Señor Falcone now; it is—"

"Let them enter—I am prepared!" said Teresa, calmly, but with a tremor agitating her lovely frame; and Lucille, unlocking the door, admitted Don Ricardo Ramos, who bowed low and remained upon the threshold.

"If Señora Clinton is not disinclined for a few words of conversation," began the man, with his sartive smile twitching the corners of his dark mouth.

"Speak, sir—what power have I to prevent?"

"All things in courtesy," replied Ramos, in a meaning tone of voice, as he remembered the contemptuous glance of his captive. "My friend, Gabriel Falcone, who loves you so intensely that I really fear for the poor youth's health, desires to know if, on the morrow, you will be pleased to meet a little party of friends?"

"I understand you not, sir!"

"I will endeavor to be intelligible. In a word, I have summoned a priest, who will to-morrow unite in the sweet bonds of matrimony, my friend Gabriel with my lovely guest, Señora Clinton."

"Sooner will I die!" exclaimed Teresa, passionately, as she retreated a step from Don Ricardo, her calmness for a moment forsaking her.

"Death is not so pleasant as marriage," laughed Ramos.
"You have my answer, sir!"

"I will," said Ramos. "What then will my friend Gabriel do?"

He gazed at it, as he spoke, upon Teresa's face with an expression of such a threatening and sinister, that the poor girl felt her heart sink within her bosom.

"You should have come to this wicked man! 'Tis well—I shall leave you!" said Teresa, calmly returning the triumphant gaze of Ramos.

But at this moment La Milla's eyes sought those of her mistress, with a warning look. The matto, seated near the window, had cast his tall, thin shape of a shadow appearing upon the top of the opposite wall, and her quick glance conveyed to him the secret of her misfortune. At the same time, the round-faced girl, and sitting on the floor beside Teresa, cried impulsively:

"Oh, man! do not die! Promise the Señor—que no morirás—que no morirás—que no morirás! Oh, señor! it is not *tres difficile* to be married—"

"Ramos! La Milla—call the servant!" cried Teresa, quickly, as Don Ricardo passed him and surveyed them.

"Please, señor, I am not afraid," persisted the matto. "They will kill him—they will do it very easily!" Then, in a low voice, and with a smile, he laid the matto's ear, she said timidly: "I am afraid we shall be killed—the brave Señor is here!"

"Lucille! be silent!"

But as Teresa spoke, she sank upon a chair beside her, lost in a swoon, overcome by the variety of her emotions. Don Ricardo sat, as he conjectured, the yielding of the chair beneath the weight of her person.

"The Señor will be sick," said La Milla, simply; "and he is not strong. And—Dolores! I am afraid he will follow if he is disturbed, you know."

She continued to gaze at the speaker. La Milla, crooning in a low, monotonous tone, clasped her hands closely.

"Lucille—will you come to him—either to-morrow?" the last she said.

"I do not know; but he will not make him more unhappy," said Ramos, with his faint smile. "Nevertheless, I know that I shall then be very happy—"

"I promise nothing, but that to-morrow I will receive his visit."

"But I may say a word to give the youth some hope?" said Don Ricardo, with a low laugh.

"You may say what you please," said Teresa, coldly, as she rose, and turned with Lucille toward the inner chamber.

Ramos left the apartment, and Lucille hastened to fasten the door. At the instant, a folded slip of paper glided between the window-wires, and fell upon the floor. Teresa seized it and read it aloud with a beating heart:

"Be of good courage, Teresa. We will come for you to-morrow." ALONZO."

"Oh, Father in heaven, I thank thee!" cried the orphan, sinking on her knees, and devoutly clasping her hands, while Lucille ran to the casement wild with joy.

But Pomfret was not to be seen. Evidently aware of the presence of Don Ricardo in the chamber, he had watched the latter's departure for an opportunity to introduce the slip of paper. This accomplished, he had retraced at once his perilous way over the walls of the adjoining house. In the mean time, Don Ricardo Ramos, after leaving the presence of his anticipated victim, proceeded to another room, where Gabriel Falcone, extended upon a couch, lay awaiting his coming. The triumphant expression of the old villain's face was noticed immediately by the gamester.

"She consents?" he cried.

"To see you to-morrow. Doubtless to reveal her long-concealed love—"

"Pish! but the marriage—"

"I am about to notify a priest of my acquaintance that he be on hand to-morrow," returned Don Ricardo. "So, my dear Gabriel, I'd like you to keep quiet, and not irritate that woman of yours, which must be a painful cure, though the bullet is not there."

"No, the bullet is not left, thank fortune!" said Falcone.

"I can assure that it is not so pleasant to carry such a companion about with you," added Don Ricardo, with his serpentine smile, as at that moment he experienced a twinge of pain occasioned by the ball which lay imbedded in his groin, and had always defied extraction, save at the risk of his

Gabriel Falcone knew that his father's skill had left a lasting
imprint with Don Ricardo Ramos.

With slow and dignified steps, Don Ricardo took his way to a small room, and, entering it, one of the various orders of
Monks established in the city, called, inquiring for a member of
the community, was ushered into the refectory, where he encoun-
tered Fray Pedro, the priest who had officiated at the
wedding of Don Tomás, the uncle of Vallejo. The worthy
monk was seated, smoking at a small deal table, for he
clerked in the library of a church in the monastery to which he
was attached. At his feet crouched a large dog, which
grated his collar as Don Ricardo entered the room.

"Down, Bago! you are unmannerly!" giving the animal
a slight kick with his foot. "God be with you, Don Ricardo—
approach; the dog is harmless."

"His looks tell him most convincingly, then, worthy
Fray Pedro," answered Ramos, pausing irresolutely as the
dog growled, displaying a row of formidable teeth, seemed
impudent to despite the visitor's advance.

"Get, Bago, out! Indeed, he is quite unused to behave
thus to visitors," said Fray Pedro, driving the dog beneath
the table, where he crouched, sullenly regarding Don Ricardo
with glittering eyes, and emitting now and then a low
growl, that at all endeavored to allay the new-comer's apprehensions.

"You shall still show such a vicious beast—hah, or at least
mean him, Fray Pedro," cried Don Ricardo, taking a chair
near the priest, so as to interpose the latter's person between
himself and the animal.

"The dog has many good qualities, and is attached to me,"
said Fray Pedro. "Poor fellow! I found him half-starved,
but healthy enough, where, doubtless, his former master was
badly. He is a great protection to me, I assure you, as I
walk the streets during these troubled times."

Don Ricardo failed to encourage the carnal nature of the
good priest concerning the merits of an animal that found
very little favor with him at; so, hastily changing the
conversation, he said:

"I spoke to you some time since concerning a ceremony—
a marriage—that I'd keep from you at my house. Your
son will be married to-morrow."

"At your house, my son?"

"At my house the parties are now residing; and, as in these unnatural times there is nothing certain but danger and death, I wish my young friends to be well and away from Mexico as speedily as possible. To-morrow at noonday, Fray Pedro, is the hour appointed."

"I will come, Don Ricardo," was the priest's answer, followed by a short snarl from his dog.

"Your canine friend seems no friend of mine," remarked Ramos, with his bitter laugh, as he walked to the door. "But, remember, worthy father, at noonday, to-morrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PLOT DEFEATED.

PUNCTUALLY as the bell announced the hour of noon upon the following day, Fray Pedro presented himself at the great door of Don Ricardo's mansion. Behind him followed the burly dog Beppo, and scarcely had the dark-featured porter opened a passage, when the animal, with a loud bark, rushed into the hall and bounded up the wide staircase. His master was shocked with the unwonted behavior of his favorite, and the servant of that less-less man in grew absolutely horrified as the bay of Beppo rang through the passages. At this moment Don Ricardo Ramos emerged from a door which he opened at the head of the stairs, and immediately found himself thrown to the floor by an instant rush of the dog, as the latter, dashing between his legs, darted to the interior of the house.

"That infernal brute has bitten me!" cried Ramos, as the servant ran to his assistance, and the alarmed priest ascended the staircase, breathing heavily in his efforts to make haste. "What in the devil's name, Fray Pedro, do you mean by bringing such a ferocious monster to my house?"

But the poor priest was too much spent with fatigue and anxiety to answer at once, and before the bark of Beppo

from the inner galleries of the mansion, sounded loud and joyfully. Don Ricardo hurried through the passages, and Fray Pedro followed him as fast as he best might.

The dark passage was now interminable to the weary friar, but at length his conductor reached the door of an apartment where within the dead of night was heard, no longer voices, but apparently full of joy. A moment after, the owner of the house had passed the way into a large chamber, where a slender girl gazed with his follower's eyes.

The apartment was hung with tapestry and lit by waxen candles, burning in heavy silver candlesticks at different corners of the room. No light entered from without, for thick curtains effectually concealed the windows.

The dog, Depo, lay at the feet of a beautiful girl who caressed the animal, while he in turn licked her white hand and hid his large head in her lap. Behind this maiden stood a smaller girl, half-veiled, to add her caresses to the noble dog. A few paces from them stood a young man, whose right arm was bound to his breast by a silken scarf, while his left hand rested upon a table covered with materials for writing.

"Your dog has made friends at last, good friar," said Don Ricardo, with a harsh laugh. "How real you this?"

"The animal may remember old friends," replied the priest, seriously, looking toward Teresa, who said, quietly:

"The dog was my poor brother's—thus!"

At once, as the maiden uttered these words, Fray Pedro noticed her features and recalled the occasion when he had last seen them. An expression of wonder was visible in his countenance, and he was about to draw near to Teresa, when the voice of Don Ricardo abruptly pronounced his name.

"Fray Pedro, you are to unite these young people in matrimony," said the latter, pointing to Fabrice, who approached the armchair. Teresa half rose and placed her hand to her bosom. There was still concealed the powder which she required to stop a wound in the extremity of danger. Lucille saw her and called the maid, and the dog, as if conscious of danger threatened the sister of his lost master, snarled and barked with an ominous growl.

Teresa Gildon saw that the crisis of her fate was approaching. She gave up all hopes of rescue by her friends, and

hesitated only as to whether she should make one last appeal, invoking the priest to aid her, ere she should defy her persecutors, and, like her lost brother, rush uncalled to the presence of God. It was a terrible alternative; for the maiden believed that Fray Pedro was a ready instrument of her cruel captors, and feared that to implore his assistance would but to accelerate her doom. Already the priest had taken her hand in one of his own, extending the other to Falcone.

"The names?" said Fray Pedro, looking to Don Ricardo.

"Gabriel Falcone and Teresa Clinton."

The priest stood a moment as if paralyzed with astonishment—then dropped his hands beside him—then clasped them violently together, while his eyes wandered from one to the other of those he had been about to unite. A sudden recollection was flashing through his brain—he fell suddenly back, an expression of horror agitating his features.

"I can not perform the ceremony," he gasped. "I can not commit a mortal sin—"

"Priest, have a care," cried Ramos, in a threatening voice.

The friar shrunk away, trembling before the aspect of the speaker, and, half-mechanically, murmured:

"I can not marry them—they are the children of—"

"*Of one mother!*" he was about to conclude, but ere the words were spoken, his throat was violently grasped by Ramos, and he staggered back against the wall of the apartment. Gabriel Falcone, unaware that a strange disclosure was thus suddenly checked, stood in blank surprise, while Teresa's heart sunk at this new scene of violence. But another actor promptly interposed. The hirsute dog sprung from the floor, and at one bound reached the bosom of Fray Pedro's assailant.

"Help! Falcone! help!" cried Don Ricardo, as he felt the dog's teeth meet in his flesh, while the double weight threw him against the friar, who, struggling for life, had wrench'd his fingers in his assailant's long hair.

The younger man drew a dagger with his left hand, and, rushing forward, plunged the weapon into Bopp's breast. But he had as well wounded a lion. The pain of the stab only increased the animal's rage, and in an instant more he had turned upon Falcone, while Don Ricardo, released from his peril, lifted his own dagger against the now exhausted priest.

At this crisis a sudden crash was heard, and a burst of sunlight shone into the apartment from a wide rent in one of the velvet curtains which had hidden the easements. Teresa and Leonelle looked up and behold the stalwart form of Dona Ricardo. He stood with one foot extended within the doorway, while his right hand clung to the easement-frame which he had just wrenched asunder. But he was not alone; hidden, up on the stone parapet, stood Colonel Montagnone, Valdigna and Leonelle.

The burst of joy with which Teresa Clinton recognized her lover was mingled with the report of a pistol discharged by that lover's hand. Alizz, with the same glance that encompassed his master, beheld likewise the imminent peril of his master's friend, Fray Pedro. Quick as thought he fired at Don Ricardo, whose dark features he had instantly recalled, before the smoke had cleared away, the villain had released his grasp of the pistol and fallen heavily to the floor. All transpired in the space of a moment; nevertheless, this brief space had sufficed for the fierce dog to drive Falcone to a corner of the apartment, where, sheltering himself behind a piece of heavy furniture, he defended himself with his dagger which was his only weapon.

Valdigna meanwhile assisted Fray Pedro to a chair, for the poor priest was nearly exhausted with his struggle, and then turned to Teresa, clasped her in his arms, while Montagnone hurried to rouse Galvani Falcone from his canine asilum. The sable dog, however, seemed at once to recognize the intent of his enemies, for with a low growl, in token of warning, he walked to the chair in which Fray Pedro remained, and crouched at his feet, quidly licking the wound which the dog had inflicted, while his large eyes watched the uncertain form of Don Ricardo, who was vainly striving to rise.

"Curse the wretched priest," Rumed. "Maledictions upon all priests!"

"Unhappily you will yourself soon need a priest," said Leonelle, running after and stooping beside Don Ricardo. "The hand is yours."

"I can't. Where's Falcone—where has he fled? Has he? What is he? What is his story? Oh, curse that priest in the graveyard!"

The tortured villain essayed to uplift his hand which still clutched the dagger with which he would have slain Fray Pedro; but the effort only forced the blood from his mouth.

"Maledictions on all of ye! Why did I meddle with the sacrament, and thus lose all? Falcone!—ha!—you should have had your will—brother and sister! ha! ha! ha!"

And with the chuckling laugh which was natural to him, Don Ricardo fell back to the floor, his eyes closing suddenly.

"He is dead!" gasped Fray Pedro, with pallid life, as Vallejo and Teresa drew near. "And without confession!"

"Confession—hah!" cried the sneering voice of Ramos, his eyes twinkling with a sinister glance on all around him; "yes, priest, let me confess. I would have married them—don't hear me, Fray Pedro? Their mother scorned and slighted me—my father branded and dishonored me. It was my reverence—hark ye, priest—to give the sacrament to both—brother and sister—ha! what think you? Have I not *confesado*?"

A gain that strange laugh rung through the apartment—then the eyes closed, and this time forever. Don Ricardo Ramos had gone to his account.

Gabriel Falcone—his bold eyes sunk, his checks pallid as those of a corpse—had listened to the incoherent words of him who had lured him step by step to ruin. The wretched young man's glance now caught the half-averted gaze of Teresa Clinton—the child of his mother. And Charles Clinton, too, was the child of Maria Minas. Gabriel Falcone! a brother's blood is on thy head, for, but for thee, Clinton were now alive and happy!

This horrid thought burned like a flame in the heart of the gambler. He cast one despairing look around him, and then, spurning the dead form of Ramos with his foot, fled precipitately from the apartment. No one followed him!

"Let the critter go!" cried Putnam Pomfret. "He's got a coal o' fire burnin' in his heart that's a nation's fit witness than hangin' or shootin', now I tell ye."

All Alonzo Vallejo, clasping Teresa to his bosom, murmured, as if in prayer: "Oh my uncle! my childhood's friend! Look down and smile upon the daughter of your beloved—the child of Maria Minas!"

THE END.

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